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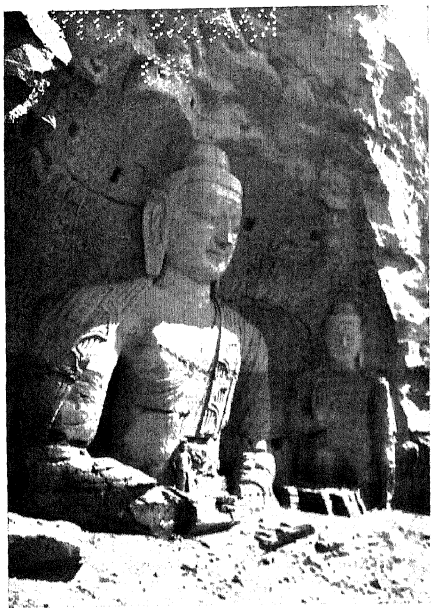
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Colossal Rock-cut Buddha Image at the Yun-Kang Cave-shrines
Northern Wei period.
See page 132.

INTRODUCTION
TO
CHINESE ART

BY
ARNOLD SILCOCK

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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To

LAURENCE BINYON

PREFACE

IN 1921 Mr. Laurence Binyon fired me with his own enthusiasm for the art of China, and it was largely as a result of my talks with him that I ultimately spent several happy years in that country. Since then Mr. Binyon's example and his writings and lectures on Chinese painting have been perennial sources of inspiration, and I owe him a debt of gratitude which I can never repay. Indeed, the completion of this book has been made possible by help and encouragement from friends too numerous for individual mention here, although I have already tried to express my thanks to them personally.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Bernard Rackham, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, who has read the book in proof and has given invaluable advice and constant help both directly and through his own writings. I am deeply indebted also to Mr. L. C. Hopkins for his great kindness in reading the proofs and for much good counsel. Mr. Basil Gray, of the British Museum, generously helped me in the same way.

To Dr. W. G. Constable, Director of the Courtauld Institute of Fine Art, I also owe much, for during our brief association at two of the great Winter Exhibitions at the Royal Academy I learnt to admire his personal qualities and his methods of work, and since that time I have been one of the many who have

enjoyed the benefits of his administration at the Courtauld Institute. At the Institute I acquired useful knowledge from the lectures of Professor Perceval Yetts, and I have also learnt a great deal from his writings. I have drawn freely on these, particularly in connexion with archaeology, architecture, and bronzes, and I wish here to record my lively sense of gratitude to him

No record of thanks would be complete without an expression of the admiration and gratitude which all lovers of Chinese art owe to Mr. George Eumorfopoulos. My debt is a great one, not only because I have so often accepted his open invitation to visit his magnificent collection, but also because this collection has supplied many of my finest illustrations.

Mr. S. I. Hsiung, the author of *Lady Precious Stream*, and Mr. Y. Ch'iang, of the School of Oriental Studies, are owed a special word of thanks for their notes on Chinese literature and history. Mr. O. H. Bedford, who has provided some delightful illustrations for this book, has kindly given me most welcome assistance in innumerable ways from its inception and has, in addition, assisted with maps.

There are many others whose works have been a constant source of enjoyment and knowledge. I owe most to Dr. J. Gunnar Andersson and his fascinating book *Children of the Yellow Earth*. But almost as great is my indebtedness to Mr. R. L. Hobson, of the British Museum, to the late Dr. Berthold Laufer, of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago,

U.S.A., to Sir Aurel Stein, Mr Leigh Ashton, Dr. Osvald Sirén, and Dr. Richard Wilhelm. My grateful acknowledgements are also due to the authors and publishers of the following books, from which I have quoted various poems and translations of passages in Chinese literature: *170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, Constable & Co., Ltd., *Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook, *An Outline History of China*, Herbert H. Gowen, Sherman, French & Co. Besides these there are many authors whom I have not mentioned, but whose works I have consulted with the very efficient and helpful co-operation of Mrs. Cardew, Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society.

But any merit this book may possess is chiefly due to the enthusiastic and untiring industry and counsel of my wife, and also of Miss Jane Oliver, both of whom have, from the beginning, shouldered all the thankless tasks which fall to the lot of kind but candid critics, experienced proof-readers, and sympathetic helpers.

Finally I wish to express my gratitude to the Oxford University Press, and especially to my friend Mr. Gerard Hopkins. Their cordial backing and our very happy association during the past few months have done more than I can well express to make the speedy production of this book possible.

ARNOLD SILCOCK

LONDON,

1 October, 1935.

CONTENTS

<i>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</i>	. xiii
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	. xix
I <i>THE BEGINNINGS</i>	. i
II <i>THE DAWN OF HISTORY</i>	. 22
III <i>THE CHOU AND THE CH'IN DYNASTIES</i>	. 41
IV <i>THE WESTERN HAN DYNASTY</i>	. 67
V <i>THE EASTERN HAN DYNASTY</i>	. 92
VI. <i>THE PERIOD OF THE THREE KINGDOMS AND THE DIVISION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH</i>	. 107
VII. <i>BUDDHISM HEALS THE DIVISION OF NORTH AND SOUTH</i>	. 131
VIII. <i>THE T'ANG DYNASTY</i>	. 151
IX <i>THE SUNG DYNASTY</i>	. 183
X <i>THE YÜAN AND MING DYNASTIES</i>	. 206
XI. <i>THE CH'ING DYNASTY</i>	. 224
<i>APPENDIXES</i>	
I. 247
II. 248
III. 250
<i>INDEX</i>	. 267

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

TEXT-FIGURES

FIG. 1	Stone Age Hollow-legged Tripod Cooking-Pot From J G Andersson, <i>Children of the Yellow Earth</i> (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd)	Page 21
2	The Horse From W P Yetts, <i>The Horse, a Factor in Early Chinese History</i> , in <i>Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua</i> , ix (1934)	21
3	Attempted Recovery of One of the Great Yu's Nine Bronze Cauldrons from a River From S W Bushell, <i>Chinese Art</i> , vol. 1 (Victoria and Albert Museum)	39
4.	A t'ao-t'ieh—Ogre's Mask Drawn by Mr O H Bedford	40
5	Types of k'uei—Archaic Dragons Drawn by Mr O H Bedford	40
6	Ancient Jade Symbols 1 Perforated disc in pale blue jade, symbolical of Heaven 2 Tube in yellow jade, symbolical of Earth 3 Symbol, pointed at one side, with a hole through the lower half, in red jade, symbolical of the South, which was named 'the vermilion bird'. 4 Rectangular symbol, with a hole through the upper end and a tiger design, in white jade, symbolical of the West, which was named 'the white tiger' 5 Semicircular symbol, plain or decorated, in black jade, symbolical of the North, which was named 'the tortoise' 6 Rectangular symbol, pointed at one end and sometimes with reed pattern, sometimes with millet pattern, in blue-green jade, symbolical of the East, which was	

List of Illustrations

- named 'the blue-green dragon' (See page 49)
 From R. Wilhelm, *A Short History of Chinese Civilization* (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.) 65
7. Inlaid Bronze Fimial (Chariot Fitting) Drawn by Mr O. H. Bedford . 66
8. Textile Heraldic Beasts in Procession Drawing by Mr F. H. Andrews, from *Chinese Art, Burlington Magazine Monograph*, 1925 91
9. Bands of Geometrical Inlaid Ornament on a Bronze Bottle-shaped Vase From Bishop White, *Tombs of Old Lo-Yang*, (Kelly and Walsh) . 91
10. Reception of the Emperor Mu Wang by Hsi Wang Mu (the 'Royal Mother of the West' of Taoist Legend) Drawn by the Author from E. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale* . 106
11. Portraits Engraved on Stone. From an inked squeeze reproduced in Osvald Sirén, *A History of Early Chinese Painting*, vol. i (Medici Society) 130
12. 'A Hundred Colts' A reproduction from one of the pair of original 16th-century woodcuts after the famous painting by Han Kan From H. A. Giles, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Pictorial Art* (Bernard Quaritch Ltd.) . 182
13. Three Neolithic Pottery Forms. From W. P. Yetts, *Chinese Art. Bronzes*, in *Burlington Magazine Monograph*, 1925 . 205
14. One of a Pair of Pierced Upper Panels. Drawn by the Author . 222
15. 'The Eight Buddhist Emblems of Happy Augury.' From S. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, vol. ii (Victoria and Albert Museum) . 223
16. One of a Pair of Dragon Masks for Ring Handles. Drawn by the Author . 246

PLATES

Colossal Rock-cut Buddha Image at the Yun-Kang Cave-Shrines From R Wilhelm, *A Short History of Chinese Civilization*, by permission of Messrs Bruckmann (Munich) and George G Harrap & Co Ltd (London)

Frontispiece

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------|
| I | Carved Antler of the Shang-Yin Period in the Form of a Horned Dragon's Neck and Head
British Museum | <i>Facing page 31</i> |
| II | Bronze Wine-Vessel in the Form of an Owl or Parrot Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum Crown copyright reserved | 42 |
| III | Stone Statue of a Horse Trampling on a Barbarian Musée Guimet, Paris Photograph, Ségalen Atigue de Voisins | 88 |
| IV | Hill Jar in Green Glazed Pottery Han Period Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright reserved | 99 |
| V | Men in Conversation Painting of the late Han period Boston Museum of Fine Arts From O. Sirén, <i>A History of Early Chinese Painting</i> , vol 1 (Medici Society) | 103 |
| VI. | Bronze War Drum or Chu-Ko Ku. British Museum | 108 |
| VII. | 'Ladies at their Toilet' Painting in ink with washes of subdued colour on pale brown silk British Museum | 113 |
| VIII | 'Winged Dragon' Wall-painting of the 6th century from a tomb in Corea From O Sirén, <i>op cit.</i> | 116 |

- | | | |
|-------|---|-----|
| IX | Early Octagonal Pagoda at Sung Shan, in Honan From O Sirén, <i>Chinese Sculpture, from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century</i> , vol 11 (Ernest Benn Ltd.) | 120 |
| X | Standing Figure of a Bodhisattva Eumorfopoulos Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum Crown Copyright reserved | 143 |
| XI | Part of a Landscape Roll Painting by Chao Mêng-fu in colours on silk British Museum | 168 |
| XII | A Boy-Rishi Riding on a Goat Painting in colours on silk British Museum | 169 |
| XIII | One of a Pair of Horses in Combat Pottery statuette. The Eumorfopoulos collection | 178 |
| XIV | Seated Lohan Ceramic statue with coloured glazes British Museum | 179 |
| XV | Bird on Bough. By an unknown painter of the Sung period Colours on silk The Eumorfopoulos collection, British Museum | 188 |
| XVI. | Tiger by a Torrent in Rain and Wind Ink painting on silk British Museum | 189 |
| XVII | Flower Pot. Glazed pottery with splashes and flecks of strawberry red and bluish purple The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum Crown copyright reserved | 195 |
| XVIII | Vase of Tz'ü Chou Ware The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum Crown copyright reserved | 201 |
| XIX. | Kuan-yin Carved and painted wood figure seated in the attitude of 'royal ease' The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright reserved | 203 |
| XX. | The Fairy and the Phoenix. Painting by Wu Wei in ink, lightly coloured, on silk. British Museum | 211 |

List of Illustrations

xvii

XXI	Porcelain Jar	Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright reserved	213
XXII	Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy	Small seated figure in white Fukien porcelain Victoria and Albert Museum Crown copyright reserved	218
XXIII	Figures from an Avenue of Colossal Stone Statues at the Ming Tombs	From Leigh Ashton, <i>An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture</i> (Ernest Benn Ltd)	219
XXIV	Porcelain Beaker	The Author's loan collection, Birmingham Museum	229
XXV	Woollen Pile Saddle Rug	The Author's col- lection	231
	Chest of Lacquered Wood	Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright reserved	231
XXVI	Blossoming Prunus Tree	Model in jade and other semi-precious stones standing in a pot of Canton enamel The Baroness D'Erlan- ger's collection	234
XXVII.	Porcelain Dish	Victoria and Albert Museum Crown copyright reserved	239

MAPS

China in Antiquity

Front end-paper

China in Historical Times

. Back end-paper

INTRODUCTION

BOOKS about Chinese art are scarce, and those for the general reader who is interested in art are scarcer still. This one is literally an introduction to the subject: an attempt to provide a simple picture of the environment and the age-long development of a great people and a noble art.

I have tried to escape the dust-cloud of dull dates which is apt to stifle the interest in books of this kind. I have also tried to save the reader a fruitless tussle with tongue-twisting Chinese names, by omitting them as far as possible. Readers who are interested, however, will find at the end of the book a guide to the pronunciation of Chinese names, synoptic tables giving the dates of the important events and personalities in Chinese art and history with concurrent events in the rest of the world, and other tabulated information. They will also find, inside the book covers, a map of China in antiquity and a map showing the eighteen provinces of historical times, which form the end-papers.

Finally I would emphasize that *An Introduction to Chinese Art* is not written from the point of view of the expert, but of one who endeavours to touch and look upon beautiful Chinese things with the sympathy and appreciation which all great art should inspire.

I

THERE is a temple in the western hills outside Peking. Over the quiet courtyard three gingko trees have spread lizard-grey branches and warmed their blue-green leaves for centuries in the sun. The priests attend upon them with *Beginnings* special awe, for twice in a hundred years, they say, the sacred trees sprang fully grown into being as a great emperor appeared.

This is the legend, but the true story of the gingko tree is stranger still. Though never seen in the wild state, from time immemorial it has been cultivated by the Chinese and planted about their temples. Thus nurtured it still survives, a living fossil from before the age of giant saurians, a hundred million years ago.

Though late in time compared with the gingko tree, the dinosaurs represent for us an age so remote in the earth's history that we never expect to see relics of it beyond the occasional fragments of fossilized bone dug up by archaeologists. Only in China have the eggs of these great reptiles been found, still lying intact under the warm sand of their primeval breeding grounds.

The myths and early writings have again and again proved to relate events, once considered ridiculous by western scholars, which later have been found

curiously near the truth. One tells of the primordial egg, one of the origin of fossils, and the oldest legends recount stories of men descended from 'dragons'. There is a strange immutability, a deathless capacity for survival which appears typically and exclusively to belong to China. Recent archaeological discoveries have proved that, even in the field of art, forms have been transmitted almost unchanged from prehistoric times. Nothing occurring or invented there seems ever to be irrevocably lost

A Chinese was among the first to discover the true significance of fossils. We point with pride to the many-faceted genius of Leonardo da Vinci—poet, painter, sculptor, engineer, and scientist, the first man in Europe to write a treatise in which the real nature of fossils is discussed. Yet over three hundred years earlier than da Vinci, Chu Hsi wrote:

'I have seen shells and mussels in the high mountains, some of them appearing in stones. This shows that the stones are primitive earth. Shells and mussels belong to water, so the low has been made high and the soft has been changed into hard.'

Small fossils of reptilian form, some coiled, some not, are to this day sought by the Chinese and, highly polished, are poised upon carved wooden stands and preserved in their collections of antiquities. Many of these fossils belong to the family of Ammonites, and it would be interesting to know whether their form influenced the development of a very early coiled type

of the dragon *motif* which later became such a universal feature in Chinese art.

The Chinese apothecaries' shops sell 'dragon bones' and 'dragon teeth', the latter being prescribed in powdered form especially in cases of melancholy, fever, madness, and attacks by demons. For nearly two thousand years books on pharmacology have been published in China giving directions for the use of these 'medicines'; but they were probably being dispensed many centuries before the earliest remaining written record. It is uncertain whether the skeletons of the great saurians of an earlier epoch were ever discovered and used for this purpose, for the bones and teeth in the shops are actually fossil remains of early mammals such as the Hominidae or sub-men, the three-toed Hipparion, the Mastodon, and the Samotherium—a giant horned giraffe. But it is possible that early accidental discoveries of these strange skulls and horns may have influenced the conception of a fabulous monster, which became the dragon of Chinese art; and the huge eggs of the extinct giant ostrich have long been known in China as 'dragon's eggs'. The prototype of the dragon may, however, turn out to be much less ancient in lineage, and even perhaps derived from the snake, or the alligator of the Yangtse river.¹

¹ This is the spelling of the name most familiar in written English, and it is used throughout this book in preference to other less popular forms, Yang-tzū, Yang-tse, &c.

The chronology given in the ancient Chinese accounts of prehistoric times may, of course, be disregarded; but queer coincidences can again and again be found in these fables

Fable, for instance, gives a series of mythical rulers and men ending with the 'nest-having' and the 'fire-makers'. Fact confirms fable with the following discoveries.

In a Pliocene lake deposit in southern Mongolia Professor Andersson has discovered a relic of a man-like ape, an extinct relative of the gibbon—an offshoot of the main stem of hominidae from which man derives. And, being related to the gibbon, and living at a time when trees as we know them already flourished in Mongolia, this man-like creature was most probably 'nest-having'. Later in time appeared the first sub-man, *Pithecanthropus erectus*, which was found in Java. Of far greater importance than these was Professor Andersson's world famous discovery of a still later type, dating from the oldest Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) culture cycle—Peking Man. The first of the cave-men, he fashioned weapons and primitive rock implements, peered from under massive beetling brows and ambled with crouching gait to hunt the sabre-toothed tiger, the bear, and antelope which roamed the grassy steppes of Mongolia and northern China a million years ago. This sub-man was still without a chin, and in other ways also like a chimpanzee. But he was not an ape, for traces

of ash and charcoal in his cave, besides adding to the evidence that he was a sub-man, show that he was a 'fire-maker'.

The boundaries of this favoured country of north-eastern Asia were already set. Mountain barriers, rivalling the Himalayas in loftiness and inaccessibility, drew a ring of almost impassable ramparts from the southernmost extremity at the coast, shutting off territories now called Siam and Burma, and on the west the vast plains of Tibet. Hills fringed the north and the ocean guarded the long eastern coastline.

And still the ginkgo trees flourished.

At the beginning of the great ice ages they were common to Europe, Asia, and India, but they survived the new arctic conditions in north-eastern Asia alone. Here the climate, although bitterly cold, was dry and sunny. Glaciers did not creep across and paralyse the steppe life as they did in a large part of the rest of Asia and in America and Europe. Other and kindlier forces were at work, for now began the age-long dust storms which brought to the North China plain that unforgettable golden landscape, the loess or eolian deposit. It is difficult for the imagination to picture huge clouds of this powder-fine soil torn up from the heart of Asia and carried thousands of miles on the wind to be laid like a vast yellow carpet upon the sheltered expanse of the North China plain. Yet in this way these fields were made.

Throughout the whole of the long ice ages, from the Old to the New Stone Age and, to a much less degree, down to the present day, this wind-borne landscape has been forming. So deep is it that the remains of Palaeolithic man, the bones of extinct mammals, unbroken eggs of extinct ostriches, and the homes of men of the New Stone Age lie drifted over in successive layers. And to-day the breeze ripples the fields of maize on the surface—a hundred, sometimes two hundred feet above the pre-glacial level. So it was that while the Sahara changed from grassland to desert, the clay and rock wilderness in north-east Asia, though intersected with watercourses, was being choked up with fertile soil. Many thousands of years were to pass before the present great river systems arose and transformed large tracts of this dusty wilderness into the verdant North China plain.

During the following ages and up to the mid-Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age no relics of man's development have been found. But from about 20,000 years B.C. (a period approximating to the Mousterian-Aurignacian epoch in Europe) settlements existed along the southern fringe of Mongolia and the Ordos Desert, and the finds there include stone implements, remains of meals, bones of mammals, and fires, and the egg-shells of the extinct giant ostrich. At two or three points near vanished rivers or oases in the continuously forming and reforming loess steppe remains of similar cultures have been discovered, including

stone scrapers, blades, and the bones of animals like the elephant, the woolly rhinoceros, the wild horse and wild ass, buffalo, deer, big-horned sheep, and cattle.

Some of these traces of a Palaeolithic industry were left by 'a population which seems to have inhabited the district throughout the whole period of loess formation'.¹ A few significant relics of this people have been unearthed, but though only carved fragments of bone they are important as some of the earliest examples of art in eastern Asia. Of the people themselves no skeletal remains have yet been found. They were hunters and they flourished for centuries about the oases and watercourses of the Mongolian steppe, but apparently not in China proper. Probably they were gradually driven back upon the diminishing sources of water by the rapidly forming loess deserts which were choking up the old river-beds.

In this way the evolution of climate and landscape influenced developing life in this region from very early times to the later Palaeolithic age.

From rather before and during the Palaeolithic age in north-eastern Asia date the earliest relics of prehistoric man in the West—first the Piltdown man of Sussex, then the discoveries in Europe of traces of the type known as the Heidelberg man, later, Neanderthal, and last the Crô-magnon and related types. In China no human bones and few remains of

¹ Teilhard and Lacent

implements have been found definitely belonging to the period between 20000-15000 and 4000-3000 B.C.

During that long period the climate was slowly changing. The thick layers of dust were torn by wind and riven by the increasing rainfall, until at last water once more gained the upper hand. The rivers re-formed, cutting new channels or finding their old beds and, laden with mud, rushed to swell the immense main stream of the Huang Ho, the Yellow River. Chief of the great systems of northern China, it wound its way from the Tibetan snows for thousands of miles over the loess. Gradually it ate through the soft bed, seeped under the fragile banks and carried away the silt, swept in a capricious course and spread fertile mud over the coastal plain on its way to the sea.

The age-long struggle between the Huang Tu, the Yellow Earth, and the Huang Ho, the Yellow River (which takes its colour from the earth), resulted, too, in the silting up of the river-bed. The consequent overflowing of the banks, from time immemorial, has periodically wiped out the population of the low-lying plain, and these catastrophic floods have earned for this river the well-deserved name 'China's Sorrow'.

So the climate changed as the wind brought the loess, and the increasing rain re-cut the old and formed new river-beds, and modified the configuration of the landscape it beat upon.

The Chinese have always believed that their earliest ancestors were farmers. This is one more of those legends which archaeologists have recently proved to be true. With the cold, dry, and sunny climate, a richly fertile yet soft and easily cultivated soil watered by rivers, one of immense size, the stage was set for the appearance of man the farmer as distinct from man the hunter.

Periods of plenty alternated with periods of fickle rainfall which left in their wake drought or flood. Through this inexorable discipline was moulded the fatalism leavened with laborious tenacity which distinguishes the Chinese character.

In a description of Fu Hsi, the first of the Ancient Sovereigns according to Chinese history, occurs the following story. He was standing one day on a bank of the Yellow River when suddenly a dragon horse rose from the waters. On his back Fu Hsi noticed certain mystic signs which he transcribed, and later he evolved from them the eight trigrams, symbols of the eight spheres of the universe. In time diviners learned to use these symbols—observe natural phenomena and consult the spirits of the ancestors and so interpret the will of Heaven. The whole universe was believed to be one entity divided into eight spheres or elements and the visible world of Nature corresponded in every way with the invisible. In these spheres all things were related to each other on a sexual principle and the two symbols representing

male and female were — — —. The spheres were, therefore, represented by eight permutations of these two primary symbols, as follows:

1. Heaven	☰
2. Earth	☷
3. Water	☵
4. Fire	☲
5. Wind	☴
6. Thunder	☳
7. Vapour	☶
8. Mountains	☴

Heaven was entirely male, Earth entirely female, while the other spheres divided these principles unequally but in certain definite ratios.

Chinese tradition assigns to the Emperor Fu Hsi *About* the dates 2852–2738 B.C., but no one knows *3000 B.C.* exactly when he lived or whether the name represents the title of an actual person or of a definite period in the development of culture when primitive Nature-worship was evolving towards a natural philosophy—possibly about 4000 B.C. But there is no doubt that the quasi-scientific ideas attributed to him appeared very early, and their logical form and completeness are remarkable when compared with similar systems of thought in the West. It is evident that the ancient Chinese loved their country-side: the streams sparkling through sunlit valleys guarded by mountains towering upwards till their snow-caps seemed to touch

the heavens. All this majesty and beauty, they thought, could only be the visible reflection of an unseen universe, equally lovely and equally majestic. And so the symbolism they evolved for mountains, heaven, fire, &c., represented both visible and unseen qualities. Later in time these ideas influenced many great thinkers and, somewhat modified, they were codified to form a comprehensive system of philosophy. Its laws have had a lasting effect on Chinese thought, and its symbolism appears constantly in Chinese art and culture from early times to the present day. But gradually the system degenerated into a stereotyped form of necromancy, and for many years past the place of the ancient diviners has been taken by a charlatan class—the geomancers. These earn their livelihood by interpreting *fēng shui*, literally ‘the influences of wind and water’, in order to determine the most propitious sites for buildings and similar matters in which a decision affecting the future has to be made.

The eight trigrams were often shown grouped to form an octagon, the central space being given to a circle filled with two comma-shaped forms interlocked, a symbol for the united female and male principle entitled Yin and Yang. This octagon, symbolic of the harmonious universe, early became a feature in many departments of life. There is a reference on an ancient inscription which remarks that the old capital city of Lo-yang was propitiously

set amidst the eight-sided hills. A tomb once existing in that region, which may have been built nearly two and a half millennia ago, was constructed in this same symbolic shape, and since that time the eight-sided form has always been popular in Chinese architecture, whether in construction or as a *motif* in decoration.

The eight trigrams were eventually multiplied by eight to form sixty-four hexagrams, and another system of divination by manipulating 'divining stalks' followed. This version of the original diagrams also appears frequently in art, but it was not invented till long after the reputed date of the Emperor Fu Hsi. Of Fu Hsi it was said:

'Before his time the people were like unto beasts, clothing themselves in skins, and feeding themselves on raw flesh, knowing their mothers but not their fathers.'

This passage, taken with an analysis of the oldest ideograms, has led to the belief that a matriarchate once prevailed, but the Chinese themselves do not say so. In addition to the trigrams and their system of divination they ascribe to Fu Hsi the inventions of marriage, musical instruments, fishing nets, writing (which is also ascribed to other legendary benefactors), the worship of God, and many other marks of civilization. Of another early ruler, Shên Nung, generally known as 'The Divine Husbandman', it is said: 'He first fashioned timber into ploughs and taught the

people the art of husbandry. He discovered the curative virtues of plants and instituted the practice of holding markets for the exchange of commodities.'

Huang Ti follows, the legendary Yellow Emperor, discoverer of copper and the inventor of weapons and bronze casting, with his empress who is still worshipped as the first to teach the people to rear silk-worms. Here again, recent discoveries have proved agriculture actually to have been in its early stages at about the date which Chinese legendary histories give to the early rulers.

In his book *Children of the Yellow Earth*, from which a great part of the information in this chapter is taken, Dr. Andersson describes his discoveries of Neolithic remains perhaps dating from about the same time—3000 B.C. They include graves, skeletons, and beautifully made but unpainted urns and jars and other pottery, jade rings, bracelets, and stone implements. These implements were actually of the same design as metal ones commonly used in the following bronze and iron ages and still to be seen in the hands of the peasants to-day.

This period takes its name from Yang Shao, in Honan, the site of one of the later prehistoric villages discovered by Dr. Andersson. It dates from the latter part of the New Stone Age, approximately 3000–2500 B.C. Neolithic remains of the same period have been found at various points in south Manchuria, east Mongolia, north-west Ssü-ch'uan,

872352
(2)
558
51
709

3000-
2500 B.C.

Kansu, and up the Yellow River, the most distant being settlements on the shore of the Blue Lake, Kokonor, in north-east Tibet.

At the beginning of the Neolithic period the inhabited part of China was chiefly the terrain of the Yellow River, its tributaries, and other smaller streams, which flowed along high on the loess plateaux till deepening erosion carved their channels out. In this age of plentiful rain the inhabitants of these plateaux therefore enjoyed conditions favourable to agriculture. The thick clay of pottery vessels from these prehistoric villages has revealed the imprints of husks of rice, showing that this cereal, the staff of life in China down to the present day, was already in cultivation there at least five thousand years ago. In addition to numbers of pots, tools and implements were also found. In every case they bear out the statements made in Chinese histories regarding the great antiquity of their civilization, but they also illustrate the continuity of shapes and sometimes even of decoration. These are reproduced upon countless objects in common use from prehistoric to late historic times, in some cases down to the present day. The human skeletons discovered have been called 'proto-Chinese' (probably one of the ancestral groups of the Chinese race), while the primitive forms of pottery and stone implements of this entirely metalless culture are immediately recognizable in their bronze counterparts of a later historic age. The earlier burial and dwelling

sites yielded curious bone knives with flints inset along a groove to form the cutting edge, armour of bone plates, beads, and rectangular bone writing tablets.

It is not known just when the Neolithic period in China began. But the prehistoric settlement at Yang Shao belongs to the later part of it and corresponds with later Neolithic cultures in Europe, cultures which had already been in existence at least five thousand years. Its distinguishing features are first the polished stone implements (especially the axe and the adze), secondly plaiting and weaving, then pottery and the art of cooking, and last the domestication of animals and the beginnings of agriculture.

The late Neolithic peoples inhabiting China seem, however, to have excelled especially in two ways—in making and in painting pottery.

Among the unpainted wares of the Yang Shao culture are found pots with pointed bottoms like those still used to hold oil which can be seen hanging from pegs in the poorest huts to-day. These were either stuck into the soft earth or hung by cords from the walls, as were some of the pots used by Neolithic man in Europe. But the Yang Shao people invented from this starting-point a most ingenious cooking pot. By combining three pointed pots to make three hollow legs and spreading the three mouths into one, they solved the difficulties of the primitive cook for ever. The bulging hollow legs hold the cooking food, while in the space between them the fire beneath has

sufficient height to burn and a larger surface of pot round which the flames can lick. The hatched lines of the decoration, at first thought to imitate the more primitive wicker baskets smeared with clay, were made by pressing rough cloth or mats on the surface while the clay vessel was newly moulded and wet. But its purpose was more than decorative because the rough texture thus given to the outside was far more effective in catching the heat of the flames

It is impossible to describe all the types of urns, steamers, and other cooking utensils which were found, but the hollow-legged tripod was evolved nowhere else in the world and is one of the most ingenious and typical. Moreover it has survived as a sacrificial vessel, with the legs changed into three udders—a fertility *motif*—through the Bronze Age, and is even sometimes found at the present day. These people also evolved the three-legged cauldron, a type developed by primitive man in many parts of the world, common in England and still used in remote districts of Europe and known best by the name ‘witch’s cauldron’.

Bits of pottery thrown out on the rubbish heap by a housewife of the Stone Age become the precious relics from which five thousand years later the archaeologist traces the sources of art and the progress of civilization. Buildings of stone and brick crumble in the course of time and are razed to their foundations; iron rusts, timber moulders, and woven fabrics fall to

dust; but the worthless potsherds buried under the soft rubbish of forgotten ages can be recovered. When pieced together they are seen once more, much as they were when they left the hands of the potter. The craftsman, dead so long that even his bones have disappeared, displays his skill once again in the beautiful form of a thin-walled urn. Even his broken fingernail is recorded by the fine scores and ridges which encircle the inside surface of the pot. The potter's wheel has crumbled but its signs are left to prove how long ago it was invented. The forms of utensils speak of a great advance in the art of cooking, and therefore of civilization. Impressions of woven fabrics pressed upon the clay while it was still soft give pictures of the types of clothes and weaving. And so too the imprints of rice husks show the connexion of China's early civilization with the original home of cultivated rice in southern Asia.

The Yang Shao people appear to have lived in skin tents or reed huts, for no traces of the use of pits as dwellings have been found as they have in Europe and America. At this period in China the pits which have been found seem to have survived for use as storehouses for grain only. Such pits were still being used as granaries by the North American Indians in our own era. Like their Mongolian colonist ancestors, who migrated at an earlier date when northern Asia was connected with the North American continent, they cultivated maize (Indian corn), and may

have brought it with them, for it has been known for many centuries in both countries. Neolithic man in south-western Asia and north Africa seems to have had little or no connexion with his Far Eastern contemporaries, for he brought to south Europe, not maize, but a cultivated form of wheat of which the wild form has long since disappeared from the earth.

The painted urns of the Yang Shao age are more beautiful than the fine, black-painted wares of Susa and Nihavand in Persia, and in fact seem to excel any which have survived from a contemporaneous prehistoric period in other parts of the world. Their painted decoration very closely resembles, in its colouring of red and black and in its designs, similar painting found on pots of a similar age in Anau, Russian Turkistan, and in south-western Russia. This resemblance suggests that there was contact even at this early date between one of the ancestor-groups of the Chinese and peoples thousands of miles away on the other side of Asia.

The finest painted urns were found in grave-sites in *Trade* Kansu, the north-west corner of the present *Roads* boundaries of China and the gateway to a well-trodden trade-route—the 'Jade Road'—which took its name from the most precious of the burdens its traders carried. In traversing the central Asian deserts this road made possible the hazardous journey of many months from China to south-west Russia. But the painted urns discovered at either end of this

route suggest that it has existed between the two countries since the remote migrations of the Stone Age. Another reason which has led to the belief that painted pottery was first brought to China from south-west Russia or Central or western Asia along the route is that, although made in China for graves throughout the Yang Shao culture period, its use was not common to all the settlements but to those in Kansu, and there it did not survive. On the other hand pottery like the hollow-legged tripod and the three-legged cauldron persisted when the making of these painted urns died out, and when early Bronze Age remains of grave-pottery are found they conform to indigenous Chinese types. Some of the symbols which occur in the Yang Shao painted pottery certainly appear again in the Bronze Age, but as they include such universal favourites as the cowrie-shell, the dog-tooth, and the toad, this is not surprising.

Among the typical forms of tools and weapons which have been handed down through the Bronze Age and the Iron Age to modern times are the arrow, the halberd, the adze, and the scythe. The drawings in Dr. Andersson's *Children of the Yellow Earth* tell more clearly than any words the familiar story of that remarkable power the Chinese possess of preserving traditional forms all through their history.

But in spite of this power there is a definite gap in the sequence of development which should mark the transition from the Age of Stone to the Bronze Age.

To bridge this gap, however, enough has been discovered to show a continuity of culture linking the Yang Shao people of the New Stone Age with historical times. The Yang Shao period definitely produced recognizable types and characteristic forms which survived in the art of China in succeeding ages.

Description of Fig 2

Evolution of the picture-writing symbol 𠂔 appears on a halberd-head, early in 1st millennium B C 𠂔 and 𠂔 from fragments of tortoise-shell and bone, found at An-Yang 𠂔, 𠂔, and 𠂔 from inscriptions on bronzes 𠂔 from the Stone Drums, ? State of Ch'in, about 8th century B C 𠂔 is the Small Seal written form when script was standardized in Han dynasty 𠂔, current since

(See page 56)

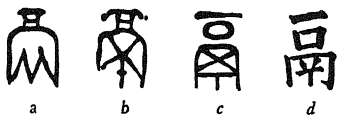


FIG. 1. STONE AGE HOLLOW-LEGGED TRIPOD COOKING-POT.

Evolution of the picture-writing symbol. (*See page 26.*)

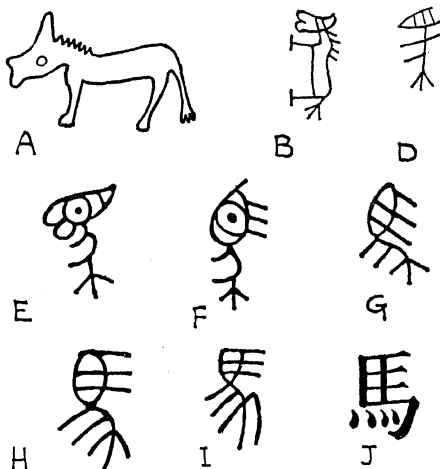


FIG. 2. THE HORSE.

II

DAWN OF HISTORY, Approximately 3000 to 1122 B C

COCK-CROW SONG¹

Anon (first century A D)

In the eastern quarter dawn breaks, the stars flicker pale
The morning cock at Ju-nan mounts the wall and crows
The songs are over, the clock² run down, but still the feast is set.
The moon grows dim and the stars are few, morning has come to the world.

At a thousand gates and ten thousand doors the fish-shaped keys turn,

Round the Palace and up by the Castle, the crows and magpies are flying

ONLY the scantiest traces of Chinese culture of the next fifteen hundred years or so have been unearthed, but there is a theory which seems to account for the hiatus.

All through the New Stone Age the rainfall had been increasing. The watercourses grew in power and volume, driving channels deep and wide through the soft earth and carrying thousands of tons away in the form of silt. As their channels cut deeper the rivers left a series of parallel diminishing terraces on either bank which became the dry and fertile land of valley slopes. The lower contours were later adapted to form the terraced rice fields which are such a distinctive feature of the hill-sides to-day.

¹ *170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, p. 30.

² A water-clock.

The rain and the tumultuous rivers eventually carved tortuous ravines through the loess of the earlier Yang Shao settlements so that what had been fertile plateau was left high and dry, while the torrents drove deeper still, even at last cleaving gorges through the beds of solid rock. The levels of cultivation naturally dropped, successively descending with the years to follow the ever-deepening rivers, while new agricultural settlements grew up along the lower course and delta of the Yellow River, where it spread out over the plain.

New conditions had ushered in a new period.

It is possible that the action of torrential rain and swollen river has washed away with the silt most of the relics of this intervening period and buried them under the alluvial deposit left by the frequent floods which devastated the land. Recent excavation supports the theory that the region bordering the Yellow River has been almost continuously inhabited since the New Stone Age. Several successive culture layers have already been unearthed and work is still going on.

Chinese history says that the early rulers were followed by Huang Ti, the legendary Yellow Emperor. He has already been referred to as the alleged discoverer of copper and bronze casting about 2600 B.C., a time when the conqueror Sargon of Agade had consolidated the empire of Babylonia in the West. Huang Ti's successors included his grandson and great-grandson, and after them came the emperors Yao and Shun, who are fully recorded by Confucius in the *Shu King*,

or Book of History, and are still worshipped as ideal rulers at the memorial temple outside their ancient capital. Their reigns are said to have covered a period

About which closed in 2206 B.C., when Shun, ignor-
2200 B.C. ing the claims of an unworthy son, selected as his successor an able minister, the great Yu.

Yu is famous chiefly because, according to legend, he succeeded in controlling and diverting the devastating waters of the Yellow River, and in dividing the land he had reclaimed into nine provinces; and also on account of the nine three-legged cauldrons of bronze which he cast from metal sent up as tribute from these provinces.

These Deluge stories, therefore, seem to support the theory that the previous inundations of
Bronze the Yellow River may have washed away
Age and buried under the mud most of the riverside settlements of the transition period from the Stone to the Bronze Age. They also appear to bear out the assumption that China had no distinct Copper Age. The reason given for this is that the copper ore mined to-day is always found in conjunction chiefly with tin but also with zinc, and such an ore when smelted would naturally produce bronze. It is possible therefore that the ancient bronze-founders never knew copper as a pure metal unalloyed with tin, and that is why they had no separate word for copper but only one word which meant 'the metal'.

The great Yu may well have been an historical

personage. The Chinese themselves believe the story of his feats of engineering and irrigation and the tale of the nine bronze cauldrons. They became symbols of the new empire, and magical properties were ascribed to them. Passages in early Chinese literature indicate that they still existed in the seventh century B.C., and the famous bas-reliefs from Shantung include representations of the story of the loss and attempted recovery of one of them from a river in 219 B.C. These pictures in stone show a characteristic three-legged cauldron of the prehistoric pottery type already referred to, but the cauldrons themselves, although at one time they probably did exist, had disappeared before the beginning of our era. They are said to have been decorated with devils and spirits, perhaps the typical 'Ogre's Mask' and dragons which appear on later archaic bronzes, and like them they may have been inscribed.

Such inscriptions give a very clear idea of the evolution of picture-writing which at its maturity *Picture-writing* produced the twin arts of calligraphy and painting. In the West the rudimentary beginnings of picture-writing are said to have been found in the red-painted symbols on pebbles of the pre-Neolithic Azilian Age discovered in Spain, and are supposed to have been evolved from symbols of sun-worship. But the symbols incised upon later Neolithic pottery are also said to be the source. In China are found the authentic beginnings in actual pictures of objects. Some are

very like the Indus Valley and other early symbols. A few, shown in Figs. 1 and 2, are the hollow-legged tripod cooking-pot, and the horse. Pictures of ideas are conveyed at first in an equally simple way. The pictograms for 'sun' and 'moon' are direct pictures of a disk and a crescent, and the two are drawn side by side for the ideogram meaning 'brightness'.

While the relics definitely known to belong to the transition period are as yet scanty, it was at this time that the foundations of an indigenous culture must have been laid. Numberless relics must exist and will eventually be unearthed from the successive layers of mud left by the Yellow River during this era of unequal combat between man the farmer and flood the fertilizer and destroyer.

Already the bronzes, jade emblems, painted and unpainted pottery, fragments of bone and tortoise-shell inscribed with archaic script, mixed up with earlier stone implements and shards, show that probably man had occupied the treacherous alluvial plain from 3000 B.C. Overwhelmed again and again, yet clinging with desperate tenacity to the land when the floods receded, it is not surprising that the legends of this people are so much occupied with tales of a hero who conquered the waters. They seem analogous with the Deluge stories (now seen to have been founded on fact), and the Deluge Hero who figures in Sumerian and Babylonian tradition.

The great Yu is said to have founded the Hsia

dynasty at the close of the third millennium B.C., but almost nothing is definitely known about this period. At about the same time the House of Shang is first mentioned. Five hundred years later it was a chieftain of this clan who founded the Shang-Yin dynasty which lasted to about 1122 B.C. and of which traditional records of later times give genealogical tables.

*Hsia and
Shang,
about 2205-
1122 B.C.*

The Chinese have always believed these records to be historically accurate, just as they believed the tradition that the writings of the Shang-Yin dynasty were engraved on tortoise-shell and bone, but it was only during the last few years that fragments of the actual archives of the dynasty found inscribed on shell and horn confirmed these beliefs. The discoveries were made in the bank of a river near the site of one of the ancient capitals of the dynasty at An-yang, in Honan. The layers of debris, the archives scattered in all directions, and other evidence prove that some great catastrophe occurred during this period and completely overwhelmed the palace buildings and swept away and buried their contents. But enough has been found here and elsewhere to show that a high degree of civilization had been reached, in spite of war, storm, and flood, during the previous transition period from about 3000 B.C. The extensive and varied remains of bronze sacrificial vessels, weapons, bronze and jade ritual objects, and other things of beautiful design and highly stylized decoration, together with

traces of charcoal, wax moulds, and other evidences of skilled bronze-founding tell that this was a developed Bronze Age culture in the grip of a long-established religion. Carved ivory miniatures of alligators, cowries, and tortoises show a more mature aesthetic sense in the treatment of *motifs* some of which were already popular in the earlier Yang Shao period. Bells and 'sonorous stones' indicate the beginnings of music. On painted pottery the so-called 'cloud and thunder' pattern, a fertility *motif* and a popular design from this time onwards, had already begun to evolve—some think from the archaic zigzag picture-writing symbol for 'lightning'—though it is more probable that it did actually develop from the spiral shapes of the symbols for 'thunder' and 'cloud'.

Shards reveal that besides painted and unpainted or black wares a most surprising invention had already been made. The first glazing, found with a band of incised decoration on broken pieces of a white, thin-walled jar, seems to put back the date for the invention of glazed earthenware more than a thousand years earlier than had previously been considered possible. On the other hand this glazing may be an accidental feature due to the chemical constituents of the materials. Egypt used to be thought of as the land where clay and glass were first united to form glazed earthenware. But the Shang-Yin jar, approaching porcellaneous wares in its delicacy and hardness, has been said to demonstrate the age-long pre-eminence

of the Chinese in the field of ceramic art and to make credible their tradition that they invented porcelain thousands of years ago. But, if they did, it seems strange that the art of glazing was thereafter forgotten until the Han period. Perhaps the two kinds of earthenware discovered were used for two different purposes; the rough, heavier sort, with traditional mat imprinting on the surface, for ordinary use, and the finely turned, fragile white ware for holding the food and other necessities required by the dead and buried in the tombs. This would harmonize with the customs in the settlements of the previous Yang Shao Age, where the fine, painted urns have been found only in the graves and the rough, unpainted, mat-imprinted pottery on the sites of villages. The custom in later times, it should be noted, was cynically reversed, and poorer kinds of pottery were sold especially for grave use. Another theory is that fine white wares of the Shang-Yin dynasty were made specially for the wealthy and the rough pottery for the poor, just as in Mycenaean pottery there were two grades for the two classes. But, apart altogether from theories as to their use, the vessels of this period show a great advance in technique over those of the Yang Shao and Kansu age.

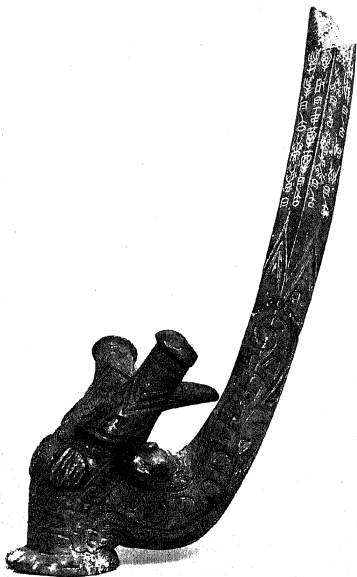
The architecture of this period¹ has naturally disappeared, but the rammed earth foundations of large structures, probably the palace buildings, have been

¹ See p. 681, 'The Shang-Yin Dynasty, &c'. Yetts, *J. R. A. S.*, 1933

uncovered. Below them are pits which were perhaps used as cellars; but no signs of brick or tile have come to light. The broken lower half of a human figure carved in stone and hollowed out at the back as if for use as a small post-socket may indicate that these people already had a simple wood post-and-beam architecture. The adobe walls perhaps stood upon rammed earth terraces and were screened by columned verandahs in the manner prevailing at the beginning of our era, and in fact resembling the traditional method of building in country districts at the present day. But this is sheer speculation, and the surmise is only justified by the natural assumption that a people at such a high level of civilization could hardly have lived in reed huts. No remains of brick or stone architecture, however, have been found.

Inscriptions on bone, shell, and horn provide the only clear-cut evidence of this civilization. Vast quantities of these have been found, while no other written records remain, and if inscribed bamboo tablets were also used, as they were later, they have long ago mouldered to dust. The tortoise-shell inscriptions are mostly concerned with a system of divination. It seems to have been the custom to consult the oracles on every sort of problem, and the priest-diviners appear to have been an extremely powerful class. They addressed the questions to the spirits of the ancestors, and the replies were divined from the patterns of cracks which appeared in a

PLATE I



Carved Antler of the Shang-Yin Period in the form of a Horned Dragon's Neck and Head. The upper portion engraved with archaic characters: the lower with surface decoration of serpents, dragons, 'cloud and thunder' pattern, &c.

Height 11 inches. British Museum.

piece of tortoise-shell after a heated metal rod had been thrust into it. The questions and replies were inscribed on the shells. Some of the inscriptions record the successive sovereigns of the dynasty. Accurate genealogical tables were necessary so that sacrificial rites to each ancestor should be duly performed, and this is in accord with the customs of later times. Texts on these bone and tortoise-shell fragments which have been deciphered disclose the fact that China at this time already had adopted a superstitious type of ancestor-worship which in one form or another has ever since held dominion over her.

The power of the priests increased and in time their conservatism stifled the free expression of the artist with lifeless rules, so that both shapes and ornament became frozen into mere stereotyped repetition of the official formulae. This was the same paralysis that has so often supervened with priestly ascendancy in other ages and cultures, when the spirit dies and only the empty shell of rite and ceremonial is left. Its beginnings can be seen in the conventionalized ornament on a carved antler from the An-Yang site. Antlers of this type, belonging to an extinct species of deer, are often found and are called by the natives 'Dragon Horns'. In this case the major portion of the antler has been carved into the form of a horned dragon's neck and head with indications of open jaws. It resembles the common form of Chinese dragon, the type usually thought to have been evolved many centuries later,

and the face is also like the 'Ogre's Mask' already referred to. The bands of angular design which fill the unornamented surfaces are recognizable as an improvement on the earlier 'cloud and thunder' pattern, and also as the forerunner of decoration found on bronzes of a thousand years later. The rest of the enrichment is equally typical. One-legged dragons, serpents, and cicadas are all included with other ornament of unknown meaning, while some ideograms of the picture-writing inscription can be seen on the upper, plain surface of the antler. This find alone therefore provides a library of information about this little-known period.

More arresting still, on account of their great beauty, are the graceful vases, libation cups, and incense-burners recently recovered by Bishop White and by Chinese archaeologists from the same district. Especially interesting are the fine stylized renderings of the 'Ogre's Mask', the elephant, silkworm, and cicada. The latter, because of its mysterious chrysalid metamorphosis, was perhaps a symbol of resurrection.

The emperors of the Shang-Yin dynasty were great hunters. They kept herds of wild animals in huge parks, and the bones of elephants and bears as well as of the extinct deer have been found. In a wild state none of these animals have inhabited China for many hundreds of years: a single herd of deer was still being preserved at Peking at the beginning of this century, but the only remaining descendants are now in

England. But in the art of these and later times the elephant and the bear frequently appear in an increasingly stylized form. The white deer is also a common art *motif*, and in districts connected with legend has survived in mountain or place-names, such as 'White Deer Summit'.

Descriptions of these emperors—their palaces, their parks, their archives, and their posthumous influence through the mediation of priest-diviners—do not indicate the existence of one closely knit empire in China, but rather of a group of clans with a common basis of art and culture. In this group the most powerful clan lorded it over the rest, and thus a feudal system gradually emerged. But for many hundreds of years the outlying tribes remained beyond the jurisdiction of the reigning house and continually harried it, with varying success.

Archaeological evidence deals almost exclusively with finds dating from the latter part of the Shang-Yin period, about 1500–1122 B.C. But enough has been discovered to show that it was a developed and distinctive Chinese culture, and that already a deep-founded, wide-spreading base had been built for the structure of the civilization evolved later from traditional material. As the people had always been farmers it is natural that their religion took its form from husbandry and the seasons. The family became the important unit, as its members worked daily together in the incessant labour of agriculture. The

father, the experienced farmer and literally the master of his family toiling in the fields, was accepted as the natural, inevitable head, and this recognition of rightful authority induced the patriarchal system and so ancestor-worship.

Nature-
and
Ancestor-
worship
Dependence on sun and earth, rain and the fructifying passage of the seasons led to beliefs in their supernatural power. The Sun-father and Earth-mother were worshipped, and from them evolved the symbol Yin and Yang representing the female and male principle, a symbol which appears frequently in the art and in the complex nature-philosophy which grew up. The important seasons of seed-time and harvest became the important religious festivals at which all met together in the fields to work and to perform the traditional rites and ceremonies of hope or thanksgiving. The New Year or Spring festival saw fecundity rites, and the annual ceremony of ploughing the furrow was still being performed in modern times by the emperor—the Son of Heaven and the Father of his people.

Very early the attitude of acceptance (not resignation) must have appeared—acceptance of the facts of life—birth, growth, and death; a feeling of oneness with the earth and the visible universe, and later, through the mediumship of priest-diviners and ancestor-worship, of oneness with the invisible and spiritual world.

The original unit of the family became twofold, the

earth-dwelling and the dwellers in the spirit-lands for a time divided from each other, yet through their religion perpetually united. The connexion between nature-worship and ancestor-worship was therefore real though not always apparent.

Not only the sun and the earth, but other phenomena of nature became animated with spirit inhabitants and were given symbolic forms in art expressing their special significance. The dragon first appeared as a beneficent nature-force. He lives in the sea and the rivers and ascends to the clouds. In the summer rainy season the characteristic thunder-storms are said to be caused by dragons fighting in the skies. Thus it is deduced that the prehistoric 'cloud and thunder' pattern accompanies the dragon as an art *motif* because both are connected in ancient nature-worship as fecundity symbols, for the rivers and the summer thunder-storms which brought the fertilizing rain are by this symbolism seen to be (like the sun) one of the grandest and most prodigal forces of nature.

The dragon boat festival—races held at regattas before the rainy season—is supposed to be a relic of imitative magic rites, the representation and therefore inducement of dragon conflicts in the sky, intended to encourage thunder-storms and abundant rain. Before long the all-powerful yet beneficent dragon naturally appeared as the emblem of the emperor. It was soon the chief in a universe which rapidly became peopled with hosts of spirits, most of them equally beneficent.

In contrast with some of the contemporaneous Mediterranean civilizations which were now arising the Chinese, with their emphasis on respect for authority, seem to have acquired an ethical rather than a religious outlook, although they were early devoted to magic and superstitious lore. There grew up, side by side, a belief in the spirits inhabiting trees and other natural objects, and a homely veneration for the old and for the forebears, of whom images at this time were made and worshipped. Most important of all as a formative factor was the traditional duty of child to parent. The primitive written symbol brings vividly before our eyes this cardinal virtue of filial piety. It is an ideogram composed of a picture of a son supporting his old father.

Thus the Shang-Yin period displays the indigenous cultural and ethical convictions which have had such a dominating influence upon the subsequent history of an art already typically Chinese in character. The period saw the consolidation of all those elements—government, religion, the calendar, language and writing, and a social system—with which art interacted to produce the solid foundation of archaic Chinese culture.

Its characteristics suggest an affinity with other early civilizations in the West. Chiefly on the evidence of alleged similarities in art and in the archaic forms of writing it has sometimes been assumed that both ancient Chinese and Sumerian cultures had a common

source, perhaps somewhere in central Asia. No proof is yet forthcoming, but it is true that the typical animal ornament of the Shang-Yin period occurs also in Scythian and in Assyrian art and suggests common origin or later contact. Both in China and western and southern Asia the animal *motifs* were gradually stylized and simplified till all but essential features were eliminated, and the face of some fabulous monster becomes the usual form. The Ogre's Mask is the most frequent, but though it may be an argument only for a parallelism in the evolution of all archaic art, yet it is a striking fact that a similar mask is common to such widely separated centres as China, Siberia, India, Scandinavia, and the Mayan art of South America. In China its name is *t'ao-t'ieh* and it has been called 'the glutton'—a warning to those using the food-vessels on which it occurs. It is, however, more likely that it was a full-face picture of the dragon or a similar monster symbolizing storm, rain, and therefore the fertilizing power of nature. These symbolic animals became so conventionalized that they soon readily combined with (and appear as an integral part of) the geometric pattern—that most delightful element in an art which demanded a well-filled background. For the Shang-Yin discoveries show that even at this early date Chinese design was supreme in the field of pattern.

The recovery of relics from the Shang-Yin period sites is mentioned in Chinese literature as early as the

eleventh century A.D , an age notorious for the craze for collecting antiques. This work is still going on, and the vitality and beauty of design in the newly found bronzes surpass anything previously unearthed. They help us to realize that it was from this virile people that the conception of a national culture sprang

The story of the ending of the Shang-Yin dynasty resembles the later history of almost all Chinese dynasties. Of the barbarian tribes surrounding the territory of the Yellow River plain a few had been colonized. The governor of one of these tribes seceded and founded a new state, renaming the capital 'Chou'. By the middle of the second millennium B.C the state of Chou rivalled in importance the parent state, and in a decisive battle a few years later the last emperor of the Shang-Yin was defeated and the House of Chou founded a new dynasty.

The Chinese histories tell of tall stone towers which the emperors built in their huge parks as vantage-points for watching the progress of the big game hunts in which they delighted. It was, they say, to one of these towers that the last emperor of the House of Shang fled, and there, having put on his imperial robes and surrounded himself with his treasures, he set fire to the buildings and burnt himself and them.



FIG. 3. ATTEMPTED RECOVERY OF ONE OF THE GREAT YÜ'S NINE BRONZE CAULDRONS FROM A RIVER.

Reproduction of an inked squeeze or rubbing from a second-century carved stone relief from Shantung. Note that a dragon emerging from the cauldron has bitten through the rope so that the men who are pulling it fall over backwards. (*See page 25.*)

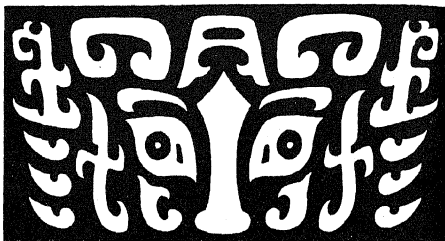


FIG. 4. A T'AO-T'IEH—OGRE'S MASK.

(See pages 37 and 45.) Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

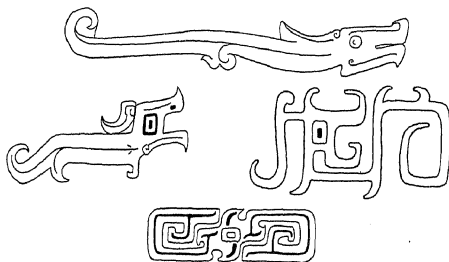


FIG. 5. TYPES OF K'UEI—ARCHAIC DRAGONS.

(See page 45.) Chiefly from objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Eumorfopoulos and C. T. Loo collections. Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

III

THE CHOU AND THE CH'IN DYNASTIES

? 1122-206 B.C.

OUR chariots were solid and strong,
Our teams of well-matched steeds,
Our chariots were shining and bright,
Our horses all lusty and sleek
The nobles gathered round for the hunt,
And hunted as they closed in the ring,
The hinds and stags bounded on,
With the nobles in close pursuit.
Drawing our polished bows of horn,
And fitting arrows to the strings,
We drove them over the hills,
The hoofs of the chase resounded,
And they herded in close-packed mass,
As the drivers checked their horses
The hinds and stags pressed swiftly on,
Till they reached the great hunting park
We drove on through the forest,
And as we found them one by one,
We shot with our arrows the wild boar and elk ¹

WITH the new dynasty came the beginnings of a feudal system. The Dukes of Chou exacted allegiance from their vassal states, but the system was loose-knit and they were wise in not pressing their claims too far.

¹ *Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, vol 1, pp 34-5

The above is a translation of the first of ten odes inscribed upon the celebrated ten stone drums of the Chou dynasty which were, till recently, kept in the Confucian Temple at Peking. They are formed from roughly dressed boulders about three feet high and the inscriptions, cut into the stone face, were originally filled with gold. They are said to date from about the eighth century B.C. The pictogram for 'horse' which occurs in the inscriptions is illustrated in Fig. 2, H.

The traditional culture of the Shang-Yin dynasty was accepted and spread more widely across the North China plain, so that even barbarian states lying beyond the influence of direct colonization were affected. These tribes included the ancestors of the Hsiung-nu, horse-riding nomads of the north, who afterwards became the traditional enemies of the Chinese, and on the south the Ch'u, a race through whom influences from south-eastern Asia percolated. The Ch'in, and savage tribes later called Shu and Manza (the latter known to the great Venetian traveller Marco Polo as 'Manzi') occupied on the west and south-west the territory fringing the foothills of Tibet. They in turn caused a few ripples to appear on the surface of the stream of traditional culture.

Perhaps the frogs which stand on the rim of those magnificent bronze war-drums of the Chou period are relics of these outlying states and represent tribal totems. The drums are characteristic of this time. Examples have been preserved in Japanese collections. Two others, later in date but in a similar style, legend says, belonged to the founder of the Shu Han dynasty, Liu Pei. One is in the British Museum, one is still venerated in an ancestral temple outside the South Gate of Ch'êng-tu, the capital of western China. Most characteristic of Chou bronzes are the heavy ritual vessels, in whose ornament the head of an animal probably perpetuated the likeness of the appro-



Bronze Wine-vessel in the form of an Owl or Parrot. Note the conventionalization of the plumage among which the 'cloud and thunder' pattern occurs. Note also the head (reversed) of the sacrificial victim on the wing. ? Chou dynasty. Height 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

pritate sacrificial victim. It was of the utmost importance that the sacrifices should be duly performed, and that the connexion between the members of the family—those on earth and those in the spirit lands—should be maintained. For without this connexion man would have suffered the horror of aloneness and namelessness in a world where the comforting conception of 'God' was unknown. This not only explains the solid, lasting form of the ritual vessels, it illustrates the diametrically opposed attitudes of East and West. China has always looked back into the past for reassurance, whereas Western peoples have looked forward to some form of immortality in the future.

Under the Chou dynasty a national consciousness first appeared. The power of both government and priesthood increased, and a tendency to systematize showed itself in every department of life. Although the forms and decoration typical of the Shang-Yin period were handed down they now gradually became stereotyped—geometrically perfect, aesthetically lifeless. The Chinese genius for preserving and formalizing choked the genius for free artistic expression. Nevertheless the artist could not always be bound down by lifeless rules, and some of the bronzes representing naturalistic animals, and many of the jades, especially those small, caricature-like figures of courtiers, show that he could still recapture a true brevity of statement and a living line.

It has been explained in the previous chapter that the Chinese had no name for pure copper but only a word which meant 'the metal', synonymous with bronze. No doubt this was because, through carelessness and natural ignorance, the first metal workers melted their copper ore full of such impurities as zinc and tin, thus accidentally discovering the casting of bronze. Having gone so far, it was not long before they also discovered iron-smelting. Tribute-lists of the Chou dynasty itemize hard and soft iron, and give the names of many articles in which the metal was used. The accounts testify to an expert craftsmanship, but the metal itself has rusted away and only its records remain. There are many reasons for the persistence and popularity of bronze and the comparative neglect of iron. Rust is only one. Bronze was the traditional metal: the very shapes still imitated ancient pottery forms (as shown in Fig 13), and tradition had grown so strong that it all but throttled Chinese art at this period.

The Nine Cauldrons of the Great Yu still survived as symbols of imperial power, but now every noble was also allowed a group of bronze vessels as insignia of rank, varying in number and type according to his station. The origin of this custom was no doubt the distribution of the vessels from the ancestral temple among his followers by the founder of the Chou dynasty when he appointed them rulers over the vassal states. Owing to its durability bronze became fashion-

able also as the medium for transmitting records of important events. Inscribed vessels were cast in designs hallowed by long usage in traditional rites, and their inscriptions formed a lasting addition to the family archives. Most of them have long since disappeared, but of those that survive one of great interest is still preserved in the monastery on Silver Island, near Chunkiang, on the Yangtse. It is decorated with a band of coiled *k'uei* (one-legged dragons) above three rows of fish-scale ornament, and in the centre of each scale the 'thunder' pattern can be seen. The *t'ao-t'ieh* (Ogre's Mask) appears at the junction of each of the three legs with the body of the cauldron, and the inscription is on its inner surface, and is sunk below it. The record tells how the king honoured with his brevet a certain minister Hsu Hui in the ancestral temple of the Chou. A translation of the latter part of the inscription runs as follows:

'Hsu Hui entered the gate and stood in the centre of the Hall. The King ordered his Private Secretary to record his Brevet to Hsu Hui in these words "Minister of Public Works, appointed to keep watch upon the Tigrine Quarter (the West), We present to you a Dark Robe, an Embroidered Border, a Halberd, an Inlaid Lance, a Plain Apron, a Red Jacket, Reins and Bridle, and a Banner with Bell Ornaments."

'Hsu Hui, in acknowledgement, made bold to extol the manifest and gracious favours of the Son of Heaven, and has accordingly fashioned a sacrificial cauldron for use

in votive services to his late illustrious Sire, and in praying for length of days and for an endless posterity to treasure and use it'¹

The cauldron is noteworthy not only because Hsu Hui's prayer seems to have been granted but because experts agree as to its genuineness. Its date has been the subject of much discussion, but it is generally ascribed to a time between about 1100 and 800 B.C. This and other ancient inscriptions amplify the Chinese histories and help to give a fairly accurate picture of the customs and costumes of the period.

The Chinese themselves have for two thousand years regarded the Chou dynasty as the classic age of national culture, and all subsequent ages have looked back to it for the pattern of perfection in manners and customs, in social institutions as well as in art.

With the increase of wealth and power the influence of the emperor also increased. Subtle changes began to show themselves in the religion, which became centred in the sovereign. He was declared to be the Son of Heaven and therefore the only fit intermediary between Heaven and the Earth dwellers. He conducted the annual sacrifices as a high priest on behalf of his people, whose interests, like their religion, were still mainly agricultural.

At the same time the belief in a multitude of spirits and demons continued, and local cults appeared. Perhaps the most persistent features of this old nature-

¹ Translation by Mr. L. C. Hopkins who has kindly permitted this quotation

worship are the Five Sacred Mountains, representations of which appear frequently in later art. So divinities of mountain, tree, or river held sway, and many of these beliefs were perhaps coloured by influences which reached China by way of the outlying states and mountain tribes in contact with India. These semi-foreign states became more important with the years. One of the greatest was founded on the western borders in the ninth century B.C. by an enterprising horse-dealer whom the emperor had found so engaging that he made him a prince. Several hundred years later this House of Ch'in became so powerful that it supplanted the Chou dynasty, and as its fame spread to foreign lands they gave its name—China—to the empire it had consolidated.

Another of these princedoms, the southern state of Ch'u, was the birthplace of the famous philosopher Lao-tzŭ in the sixth century B.C. *Lao-tzŭ*

He enjoyed a great reputation, perhaps because no one could understand him. The essential core of his teaching was *Tao*, which is usually thought to be a name for the elemental power in nature as the origin of all things. For the rest he appears to have propounded a mystic nature-philosophy of quietism, contemplation, and receptivity. The doctrine felt the influence of Hindu ideas which penetrated from the south-west into the region of the Ch'u state where Lao-tzŭ was born. The ancient worship of spirits added further confusion as the cult spread till it

reached the far West, whither, legend says, he vanished at the close of his long life. This episode is one of the most popular represented in art, and the usual version shows Lao-tzŭ as a very old man riding away on an ox. The innumerable deities and fairies and the superstitious practices which later characterized Taoism, by their appeal to the craftsman's emotions and imagination, enriched the storehouse of decorative art. But this religion retained little of an early quietist philosophy and soon no semblance remained of the attitude revealed in Lao-tzŭ's reported sayings:

'Keep behind and you shall be put in front'

'Recompense injury with kindness'

'Mighty is he who conquers himself'

'He who is content has enough'

These are the more remarkable when one remembers that Lao-tzŭ lived about five hundred years before Christ, who also said 'The last shall be first' and 'Do good to them that hate you', or Seneca, who pronounced that 'To master one's self is the greatest mastery', or Cicero, who wrote 'I do not perceive why he who is happy requires to be happier'.

Taoism, arising in the south, grew to a debased maturity and remained most popular there, a religion rich in a southern wealth of imagery. Its new art *motifs* were gradually added to such time-honoured emblems as the Ogre's Mask, the thunder pattern, the dragon, turtle, unicorn, and phoenix. Of the four last the unicorn and phoenix were also fertility *motifs*, but

it is not yet known whether they appeared as early as the dragon and the turtle, though they rival them in popularity. The cicada and the so-called 'recumbent silk-worm' occur with almost equal frequency as the dragon, and illustrations show examples of most of these designs in bronze or jade, two of the most permanent and popular materials of the time.

Jade, in a great variety of colours, had been prized from prehistoric times and, as we have seen, *Jade Architecture* occurs in the Shang-Yin finds. Emblems of sovereignty and symbols of heaven, earth, &c, were carved in white, blue, black, and other jades, and in the Chou period these and a large number of similar ritual objects were made in strictly regulated shapes and colours and prescribed for use in the rigid observances of the time. They included carved weights for placing on the eyes of the dead, tongue-pieces in the form of the cicada—symbol of immortality. There were also umbilical roundels, models of pigs placed in the hands of the dead, and many other objects whose use survived to later times. As for sculpture and architecture there is little information about the materials and forms. Rammed earth, sun-dried brick, and timber were probably still the materials in common use, but they have disappeared. There was no direct contact with Western civilizations, so that their ideas of imperial aggrandisement, of monuments and palaces which should be permanent memorials of the might of great conquerors remained unknown to the Chinese,

who were interested in the business of farming, the science of government, and the art of living, not in trade expansion and conquest. Although stone was available and became more common later, they were content to use less permanent and more easily fashioned earth and timber. We read that

'the imperial palace consisted of a vast enclosure, surrounded by high mud or brick walls, in which were the following: the dwelling-houses of the emperor, the empress, the concubines, and their servants; the offices of the ministers, reception halls, and temples, shops for weaving silk and hemp for the use of the court, treasuries for the preservation of the imperial archives, historical documents, jewellery, and other precious belongings of the state or the emperor, depositories for stores and all that was necessary for the maintenance of life. In other words it was a walled city within the capital city, reserved for the emperor, his household and his government, and the monarch seldom left it except in his official capacity.'

It was in fact the model for all the palaces yet unbuilt, the last of which—the Forbidden City in the centre of Peking—is a magnificent example.

So too costumes, ceremonial, and customs of the Chou dynasty became the models for future ages. The exactitude and perfection of technique characteristic of the latter years of the period can best be seen in the magnificent sacrificial vessels of bronze. Later in date than the Silver Island cauldron, they reveal a greater mastery, yet this technical perfection is marred by the curious rigidity which traditional formalism had

imposed upon the artist. It was as if the body of art performed its functions in the state of coma preceding death and *rigor mortis*. Fortunately it was revived just in time as the result of a succession of shocks administered to the social structure by that dynamic personality, the founder of the succeeding dynasty

Confucius, the most celebrated of China's great men, lived when the power of the house of Chou was paramount. His name was K'ung *Confucius* Ch'iu and his honorary title was *Ta fu tzü*, 'whence he came to be called K'ung Fu-tsze, and this appellation, latinized by the Jesuit translators, has taken the form in which his name is known in European literature'. (*The Chinese Reader's Manual*. W. F. Mayers) The Latin version has combined the name and the honorific into one Confucius will always be revered because, single-handed, he did more than generations of his predecessors to consolidate Chinese culture. He did not found a religion, but he formulated a code of ethics based upon the traditional worship of ancestors. He did not form a school of literature, but he re-edited the classics already in existence. He did not introduce fresh customs, but he gave meaning and new life to old observances and emphasized the importance of good manners and ceremonial. From his work and his convictions as philosopher, historian, and aristocrat grew his capacity and prestige as a statesman. But his conception was the 'superior man', the gentleman, an essential cog in the complex but efficient machinery

of the State, not the athletic, intelligent free man, the ideal of Greek civilization. Confucius was an agnostic, and the supreme importance he gave to tradition, order, and rightness ultimately deteriorated amongst his followers into mere respect for age, ceremonial, and a good façade. Not to 'lose face' became essential, and there emerged an undue conservatism and an irrational insistence on the value of empty form. Thus Confucius, the superior man, was unwittingly responsible for tightening the grip of formalism upon an art already bound down by laws and restrictions.

Yet in some ways his influence on aesthetic development was invigorating. From the earliest
Sculpture times the custom of interring a great variety of things for the use of the dead had continued. Wives, servants, and animals also were buried alive in the graves of chieftains. Confucius condemned this custom of immolation, and went still further and deprecated even the use of jointed wooden figures because of their too close resemblance to the human victims of the old barbaric rites. Although immolation, as a part of the funeral ceremonies of emperors and nobles, did not completely die out for many centuries, with a general adoption of these new ideas appeared the custom of substituting pottery statuettes for the sacrifices at these hecatombs. Then the burial of earthen imitations of precious objects also came into use, for if a clay model of a wife would do, why not clay models of other things? As time went on, the models, known

as *ming-ch'i*, were made with greater care. It is to their endless variety and the superstitious fear which has ensured their preservation in hundreds of thousands of graves that modern scholarship owes so much of its knowledge of life and art in ancient China. Stone figures of retainers and animals, many of them larger than life size, were often placed outside the imperial tombs as a substitute for the practice of living burial. It soon became customary to increase the impressiveness of the funeral observances by arranging these sculptured figures in long imposing avenues leading to the huge mound of earth which was thrown up to form the mausoleum. This practice began in Chou times, and though remains of these statues have not been discovered they are mentioned in concurrent writings, and much-weathered and damaged examples have been found near graves dating from a few hundred years later. Before long a legend grew up explaining that their purpose was to scare away the demons that devour the dead.

The rough earthenware grave figures already referred to were by no means the best that the Chou potters could turn out. Little of the finer *Pottery* wares has survived, but enough to show that in technique there was not much advance upon the types produced in the Shang-Yin period. In fact the appearance is less attractive since a hard grey clay, unpainted and with no moulded decoration beyond the very simplest, was usually employed, and the one noticeable

feature is the potter's success in adding legs, lids, and handles to bodies of more graceful form and in general imitating the shapes of bronze vessels. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that the potter's apparent lack of technical ability was due not to careless ignorance and an inferior culture but to a deliberate, conscious attitude. Just as the Greeks knew how to construct the arch, but, regarding it as an unaesthetic form, deliberately refused to use it in their buildings of the best period, so the Chinese, since they had bronze, seem to have regarded pottery as unfit for ceremonial or formal use, and therefore relegated it to the class of 'vessels of dishonour'. At any rate, we find in a book written in the fifth century B.C. the statement that 'Pattern and bright colours detract from the merit of pottery'.

The potter's wheel, which had been in use in hither
The Potter's Asia prior to 3500 B.C., in Egypt since the
Wheel Fourth Dynasty—about 3200 B.C.—and in making the Minoan pottery of Crete about 3000 B.C., was first used in China probably a little later, and during the Chou dynasty references to it are made in the writings of the time.

One type of pottery which was 'thrown' on the
Glass wheel specially deserves mention since it is studded with remains of coloured glazes. This may be one of the prototypes in earthenware of similar decoration, with glass inset like jewels, which occurs on bronzes of the following (Han) period, though this

pottery also may date from the Han Dynasty and may have been made to imitate the bronzes of that time. For it must not be forgotten that this was an age which displayed an increasing tendency to copy bronze forms in pottery. Excavations at a Chou dynasty tomb site at Lo-yang, in Honan, yielded finds of very beautiful coloured beads, buttons, and fragments of vases in glass. The latter prove to have been made by winding white-hot rods of glass round a sand and clay core, the technique used in the West up to the time of the invention of blowing and moulding early in our era. If further investigation confirms the authenticity of these finds it will indicate the existence of a highly developed glass industry in China at least six hundred years earlier than the Chinese histories record. There is ground for this assumption because Chinese glass of this early date contains much lead, whereas coeval Mediterranean glass does not. Yet one of the favourite designs, the so-called 'revolving eye' *motif*, was well known in the glass of the Mediterranean civilizations during the last few centuries before Christ. It occurs in Chinese art of later times and is still used in painting the rows of circular rafter-feet under the eaves of buildings, and on the prows of junks. The symbolic significance of this eye has been much discussed without definite result, but it is supposed to have been placed on either side of the bows of boats so that they could find their way among the reefs and shallows of the Yellow Sea and the treacherous lower reaches of

the rivers. At any rate the feature does not usually occur on the craft which ply the less dangerous upper courses of rivers far inland. Many beautiful pictures in colour of the rich and fantastic types of these two-eyed vessels can be seen in Ivon Donnelly's attractive but little-known book *Chinese Junks*.

Of painting as a fine art no trace remains, but there are allusions in literature, and Confucius is said to have admired the mural paintings of the time. He strongly approved of art, not for its own sake, but for its beneficent influence on human nature. The so-called 'spiral writing', which was described in the chapter on the Shang-Yin period, persisted with little change throughout the Chou dynasty. In Fig. 2 a few examples of the pictogram for 'horse', formed in the wax moulds from which bronzes were cast, are evident improvements upon the earlier types scratched with the stylus on bone or tortoise-shell. But it was not till the next dynasty that drastic changes were introduced, when scribing with a pointed instrument began to fall into disuse, and handwriting with the new writing-brush brought about modifications which aided development towards the art of calligraphy. This brush was probably an improvement on existing brushes only through the use of sable or similar fine hairs.

Up to this time the centre of Chinese civilization still remained the low-lying plain alternately flooded and drained by the Yellow River and its tributaries.

*Painting
and
Writing*

The princedoms which lay on the borders jealously watched the waning power of the ruling House of Chou, and watched too the inroads through the northern hills of the Hsiung-nu, horse-riding nomads who had already become the nation's traditional enemy. If China's feudal territory can be thought of as a wheel with the ruling House as the hub, then the surrounding states can be likened to the wedge-like spaces between the spokes radiating from and owing allegiance to the hub of central government. But on the north there was no powerful buffer-state, and the Hsiung-nu were slowly driving a wedge in towards the axle-pin, the capital of the Chou, which was ultimately moved south to a safer site. The feudal system had become unbalanced, and of all the vassal states the Houses of Ch'u on the south and Ch'in on the west were the best organized and most powerful. The domain of the Ch'in included roughly the present province of Shensi and north Ssü-ch'uan and was enclosed therefore by the upper reaches of the Yellow River on the east and the Yangtse on the south. From now on the well-wooded, hilly region surrounding the upper Yangtse plays a larger part in history, and this river terrain assumes almost equal importance with that of the Yellow River.

In 221 B.C. the great champion of the Ch'in dynasty achieved a signal victory over his rivals and founded an empire. He styled himself Shih Huang Ti or First Emperor. As Prince of the wild western state of

*Rise of
House of
Ch'in*

Ch'in he was something of a foreigner and his career was in every sense spectacular and un-Chinese. Yet the very faults of this conquering despot ultimately achieved good effects, for by his bloody victories he welded China into one great empire and spread its fame far into the Western world. New lines of communication were opened up and traffic in goods and ideas flowed into a China organized and ready to receive them.

Shih Huang Ti's egoism was boundless. He decreed the collection and melting down of the bronzes, many of which bore historic inscriptions, and the burning of all the ancient books and records, hoping by this means to wipe out the evidence of China's previous greatness and secure his claim to the title First Emperor. But even these drastic measures in the end worked for good because they broke the bonds of conservatism and convention which under the Chou were slowly strangling art and culture. Shih Huang Ti, on the contrary, enthusiastically accepted new ideas, and numbers of new monuments arose to give them expression and to gratify his unquenchable lust for fame and power. Thus by the destruction of the books and bronze works of art, by his expansion and consolidation of the empire, and then by the demand for new buildings and their adornment he all unknowingly revitalized the aesthetic life of the nation. Like most great conquerors his megalomania ran first to vast destruction and then to a vaster reconstruction. He

*Ch'in
Dynasty
221 B.C.*

was victorious over the dreaded hordes of Hsiung-nu, drove them into the far north and flung the Great Wall of China across a thousand miles of new mountain boundary. The Great Wall has been called the most considerable work of man upon earth and the only one which would be visible from the moon. The truth of this statement seems likely to remain in doubt, but one feels that the shade of Shih Huang Ti would heartily approve it. For every palace destroyed in a conquered capital he erected a replica in his own, and as a convenience for himself and his staff the emperor built hundreds of palaces throughout the land to serve as provincial head-quarters during his tours of inspection. He was continually setting up stone monuments and statues to commemorate this or that event: even the frequent landings he made on a voyage up the sea-coast were not thought too trivial for another series of great memorials. But of all this extravagance only portions of the Great Wall remain. Its construction strengthened and extended existing earthworks and went on for many years. Tens of thousands of men were employed upon it, and the famous general Mêng T'ien was in charge of the work.

Mêng T'ien's fame, however, rests largely upon the legend that he was the inventor of the writing-brush. Until his time the written characters were also scratched with a pointed instrument upon tortoise-shell, bone, ivory, and, lastly, bamboo tablets in much the same way as the Romans wrote with a stylus upon

wax tablets. Brushes were, of course, already in use: the red and black decoration on the pottery vessels of the Yang Shao era from Kansu was obviously painted with the brush, and the kit of a lacquer-worker with earthenware palette, container, and brush has been recovered from a tomb of the third century B.C. At this time, it appears, the small fine-hair variety was also developing into a novel type resembling the delicate pointed brush of hare or rabbit's fur which is employed to-day. The use of ink in place of (or, rather, in addition to) pigments may date from the Chou or early in the Ch'in dynasty. Indian ink, once thought of as a fourth-century invention, was probably known much earlier, and in a dry form it was exported to India from China. The Chinese made cakes of black ink by burning oil obtained from the nut of the *t'ungmu*, or wood-oil tree, which is peculiar to their country. This oil was also used for caulking junks, waterproofing paper umbrellas, manufacturing paint, and for many other purposes, while to-day it is an indispensable ingredient for making varnishes in Western countries. In China the ink-cake is still rubbed down with water on a stone palette until it reaches the required consistency for writing or drawing on woven silk. Perhaps this was the method over two thousand years ago. At first only sheets or scrolls of silk were used, but by the beginning of our era the manufacture of paper from silk rags had been invented, a form of paper-making which was first adopted in England about 1750. Yet

curiously enough the Chinese historians do not seem to have concerned themselves with such matters for, as in the case of glass, the mention of paper does not occur in literature before the second or third century A.D. The *t'ungmu* tree grows best on hilly ground in the rainy, temperate climate of the upper reaches of the Yangtse river, and it is this region which is still the centre of the great brush-making industry. So possibly the House of Ch'in, which dominated a part of this area, did actually (as the legend states) produce the first fine brush-writing, the materials for which were all at hand.

The adoption of the freely moving finely pointed brush for writing on silk, produced a rapid, flowing movement and probably diminished the size of the characters, making it difficult for the brush to follow the sweeping curves of the old 'spiral writing'. The strokes naturally became those which were more easily made in fine brushwork than by a heavier brush and scribing tool. The new hand-writing was before long further improved by Li Ssü who, according to legend, invented the Lesser Seal character. This was a modification of the older Great Seal character, so called because of its suitability for seal inscriptions. The Lesser Seal diminished the number of strokes in each symbol and made the writing simpler and quicker. As a matter of fact, however, this was only one of several different scripts current in the Ch'in period.

Li Ssü is said to have been also a champion of

*Writing-
Brush and
Changes
in Script*

the emperor's radical policies, the destruction of the feudal system with everything else which belonged to the past, as a means of vitalizing the new empire. He was unsuccessful. Tradition and the concepts of Confucius were too deeply rooted in the souls of the people. Many of the books and art treasures were hidden in house walls or buried and thus escaped destruction, while the emperor earned the hatred of the great class of cultured men, hundreds of whom he had put to death. Still he went on his way fighting, travelling restlessly through the land, building, organizing, and doing all things on a more savage and lavish scale than was ever done before or since. He built his most famous palace, the Ah Fang Kung (or O-p'ang

Architecture

Kung), on the bank of the river which flowed through his great hunting park of Shang Lin. The palace was 500 feet long and 250 feet wide, and within it 10,000 people could be seated. Though every trace has disappeared it is well known from descriptions in literature, from poems and paintings, and especially from a picture made by a famous artist in 1100 A.D. This is evidence that the design, developed from the Chou palaces, displayed the principal features which have been reproduced in Chinese architecture ever since. Some of these palaces, so it is said, had bronze columns and were decorated with mural paintings. The composition was no doubt, like early Indian painting, so designed as to fill the available surface completely and avoid any of those empty spaces

of which the artist of this time was so afraid. The subjects were allegorical and legendary, scenes from the lives of the great rulers and sages of the past, and they were probably painted direct on to the walls, which they covered from end to end of a courtyard enclosure or a hall of audience. Remains of this type of painting, many hundreds of years later in date but in the same tradition, can be seen in the temple frescoes in out-of-the-way country districts to-day, and their fabulous monsters vividly recall the descriptions in literature of the earliest Chinese paintings and their mythological subjects. *Painting*

The most remarkable sculptures of this reign commemorated the legendary appearance of twelve giants, fifty feet in height, in the far western province of Ssü-ch'uan. The emperor commandeered all the bronze utensils and weapons he could lay his hands on, and melted and cast them into twelve colossi in order to immortalize the event. Probably, however, this merely provided a heaven-sent excuse for disarming the population. These huge statues are frequently mentioned by writers of the next dynasty, and two of them were still in existence in the fourth century A.D. But though typical of the emperor's mania they were not typical of the metal-workers' art. The bronzes of the period show a complete revulsion from the rigid form and all-over decoration of the late Chou dynasty work. They are light, free, and graceful and seem to have affinity with *Sculpture*

Persian designs. Some of the small animal figures are specially fine and many are plated with silver. *Bronze* This 'animal style', previously mentioned in connexion with the Chou dynasty, is thought to have been introduced into China through the agency of the nomadic Scyths and Hsiung-nu. The Scyths and later the Sarmatians, with whom gold had always been popular, must also have introduced this metal to *Gold* China, for it now occurs freely for the first time in Chinese art. It was used for inlaying bronze, a craft which rose to a high standard of beautiful execution during the period which followed.

For the great new empire was shortlived, and the Ch'in dynasty collapsed with the death of 'The First Emperor' only twenty years after his enthronement. Again the barbarous practice of immolation, attacked but not killed by Confucius, reared its head. In the colossal mausoleum they constructed for Ch'in Shih Huang Ti thousands of workmen were buried alive, together with all the imperial concubines who had not borne male children. Once more China was plunged into war, and the Hsiung-nu hordes poured over the Great Wall carrying death and destruction through the land.

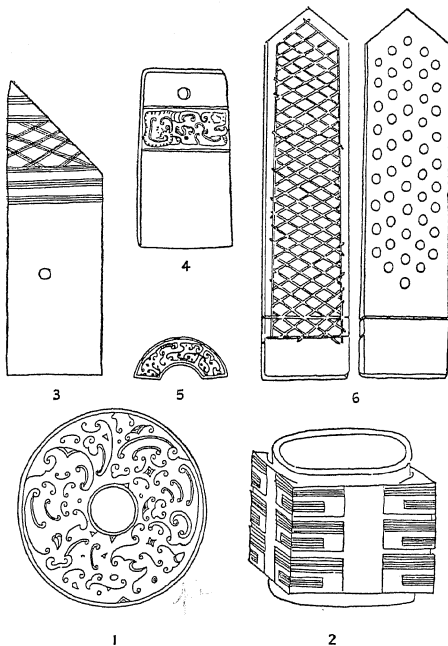
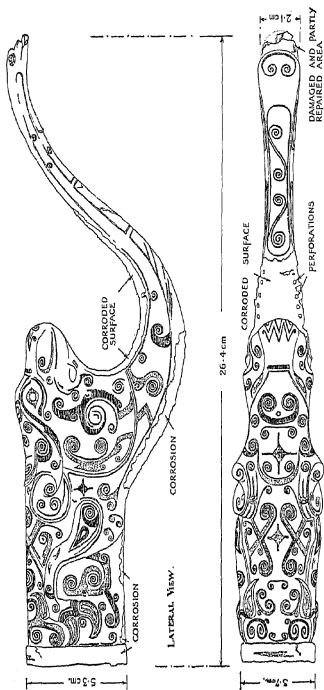


FIG. 6. ANCIENT JADE SYMBOLS. (*For description see List of Illustrations.*)



VIEW LOOKING DOWN.

DOTTED AREA - SILVER.

HATCHED - GOLD.

10 0 1 SCALE. 3 4 5 cm

DRAWN FROM THE ORIGINAL.

by
C. H. Bedford

FIG. 7. INLAID BRONZE FINIAL (CHARIOT FITTING).

Said to have come from the Piao Tombs, near Chin-ts'un, Honan. ? End of Chou dynasty.
(See page 69.) British Museum. Measured and drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

IV

THE WESTERN HAN DYNASTY, 206 B.C.—A.D. 25

THE AUTUMN WIND¹

By WU-TI (157-87 B.C.), sixth emperor of the Han dynasty. He came to the throne when he was only sixteen. In this poem he regrets that he is obliged to go on an official journey, leaving his mistress behind in the capital. He is seated in his state barge surrounded by his ministers.

AUTUMN wind rises white clouds fly
Grass and trees wither geese go south
Orchids all in bloom chrysanthemums smell sweet
I think of my lovely lady I never can forget
Floating-pagoda boat crosses Fên River
Across the mid-stream white waves rise
Flute and drum keep time to sound of the rowers' song,
Amidst revel and feasting, sad thoughts come,
Youth's years how few! Age how sure!

LIU PANG, the founder of the Han dynasty, was a native of the southern state of Ch'u. He was thus the third semi-foreigner in succession to establish his House as dominant over all China, for *The Revival of Learning* the Chou had originally come from the west and so had the House of Ch'in. Under the Han the Hsiung-nu were driven back into the north, and culture once more spread and flourished. Led by the literati, the people took part in a spring-like revival of the national spirit. Some of the ancient writings and records which had escaped 'the burning of the books' were unearthed from their hiding-places in walls or

¹ 170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, p. 48

underground pits, and the teaching and example of Confucius held sway again. But though the feudal system was revived for a time and scholarship was held in honour, the cleavage in the continuity of art development could not be bridged. Fortunately for the artist the break with cramping convention had been made once and for all, and new influences had brought new ideas and materials which were not lightly to be given up.

Liu Pang proved to be an outstanding soldier, statesman, and organizer. The empire pushed its boundaries even beyond the furthest limits controlled by Shih Huang-ti, and, following this expansion, in later years embassies and trade missions set out overland or in fleets of junks till ultimately they reached the Persian Gulf and the Roman Empire. In all these new enterprises and changing ways perhaps the most immovable customs were those relating to the burial of the dead. As there are now many well-known tombs

Tombs of the period in which the design and funerary furniture give an illuminating picture of contemporary life, a brief description of them will be given before any attempt is made to trace individual developments in the various crafts.

The general plan and mode of construction of the earlier Chou tombs probably differed considerably from the late Chou and Han types, for even these varied in size and shape. But though the earlier tombs have not survived, fragments both of bronze armour

and of chariots recovered from their ruins show that the burial customs persisted. Cowries and other shells, shell ornaments, bronze clapperless bells, and bronze vessels for food and drink have been found in tombs of widely differing dates, but the sacrificial vessels were usually kept in temples or in sacrificial chambers separate from the tomb-chamber. The more important of the later graves generally yield relics of immolation. In addition to chariots and accoutrements the chieftain's chariot horses, with other animals brought to the burial, were interred in separate pits near by. In one well-preserved example an inclined road, tunnelled from ground-level down to the doorway of the coffin chamber, was unearthed. This main chamber was formed first by making a deep excavation and laying on the bottom a foundation of stone slabs. On this was constructed an extremely solid floor, walls, and roof, made of squared baulks of timber. The whole was then covered with alternate layers of pebbles and charcoal filled in up to the level of the ground and finally mounded over with earth. The coffin occupied the centre of the chamber, the timber-lined interior had niches for grave objects and was coated with lacquer and decorated with a frieze in fresco, while the entrance was given a simple but dignified stone porch with columns resting on iron bases. The Chinese believed that the universe comprised Heaven (the male principle) and Earth (the female principle), and that the human being was an

integral part of this universe. In every soul were merged two lives (analogous to the conceptions *animus* and *anima*). The male principle of the universe provided the spiritual half which at death returned to Heaven: the female principle provided the other half which was restored to Earth to hover round the tomb in which the body had been laid. The tomb therefore was regarded as the spirit's earthly home and nothing which might be needed was forgotten: the mourners ensured their own comfort by providing for the comfort of their dead. Many tombs were eventually grouped in one large enclosure and surrounded by earthworks pierced with occasional gateways. So in that place arose a city of the dead, where each tomb was provided with its own complete entourage and furniture and its own subterranean road. But though reminiscent of ancient Egyptian practice, these customs actually differed in many ways, particularly as there was no attempt to preserve the physical body by embalming. Red pigment, however, was used in the coffin or upon the body from Shang-Yin times onward, and in the grave pottery of the earlier Yang Shao era, and this custom may have had some connexion with the red-burials which are a feature of pre-historic graves in many parts of the world.

The objects recovered from the late Chou, Ch'in, and early Han tombs are extraordinarily beautiful. In the bronzes and small carved jade emblems and badges of rank the free and natural artistic expression

associated with the period is specially noticeable. The little models, only a few inches high, of male and female retainers give an idea of the costumes of the period. One of them wears a gown belted and clasped with the typical girdle-hook, showing in miniature a form in use down to the present day. Actual examples of these girdle-hooks were also found, graceful arcs of bronze inlaid with turquoise and gold. But this is only one kind among innumerable everyday things recovered, of which a few are of special interest. They include other girdle-hooks of gold inlaid with jade and of bronze inlaid with mother-of-pearl; ivory chopsticks; delicately carved bone and ivory combs, and lacquered vessels painted in various colours in which well-known designs like the Yin and Yang (female and male symbol) and the phoenix occur with attenuated geometrical designs. Bronze two-edged swords and halberds were found; counting-beads—the forerunners of the abacus; life-like bronze miniatures of animals, and fabulous beasts of magnificent heraldic form. Then there are bronze globe-shaped, covered vessels and elliptical bowls with lids and mannikin feet; bottle-shaped bronze vases decorated sometimes with gold and silver inlay, sometimes with inset gems and coloured glass. The 'revolving eye' already mentioned occurs in glass of all sorts—beads, insets, plaques on bronze and gold work—while some of the finest workmanship is seen in the thin gold necklace chains and pendants.

Radiating from all these things there shines a refreshing freedom, almost an abandon, in the design and enrichment revealing the revival of joy and hope in the soul of the artist. Freed from priestly oppression and the toils of inexorable tradition he threw off the fetters of mathematical exactitude and abandoned the rigid rules of archaism. Under the Chou every surface had tended to be smothered with close geometrical patterns and animal designs stylized almost beyond recognition. But now the patterns became delicate and free. Drawn upon surfaces which convey a restful effect by means of perfectly balanced passages of decoration alternating with empty spaces, strangely the resulting harmony has the quality of music. The animal ornament is still sometimes conventionalized but not involved: rather it evolves and flows out into the magnificent sweeping curves of heraldry. The rearing dragon, with his arching back and unfurling foliated tail, immediately reminds us of the lion rampant of Medieval England.

But none of these things reveal the new spirit more clearly than the exquisitely finished mirrors.

Bronze
Mirrors These small disks of bronze, the surface highly polished to give a reflection and the back having a pierced boss in the centre through which a cord was looped as a handle, were probably invented in China during the Chou period. They were usually made in diameters of two and a half to ten inches. The mirrors from tombs of the third century B.C. are sometimes

circular, sometimes square, and their backs are decorated round the boss in designs of equal ingenuity, whether complex or simple. Often they are gay with tiny plaques of turquoise and arabesques of gold. Some of them had been carefully wrapped in silk, the remnants of which were found still sticking to the once polished surface. Their presence in the tombs is explained not only by the presence of other articles of the toilet but by the ancient belief that in the darkness of the grave they alone could light the dead. This belief owed its origin to the inability of primitive peoples to distinguish between the two forms of light, one from its source, the other from a reflecting surface. Mirrors, therefore, were thought to be an actual source of light, but, like the heavenly bodies, an intermittent one. But soon after this time (about 200 B.C.) a host of curious notions began to cluster round the bronze mirror.

‘On its back figures of Taoist fairies appear probably for the first time in Chinese art. A mirror with a concave face was used for kindling sacred fire from the sun’s rays. Ritual purposes were also served by another which collected dew on moonlight nights. Mirrors are valued as charms against goblins and disease, and, moreover, when powdered and taken as a medicine they cure the sick. They are guardians of conjugal fidelity; at least one (or, rather, half of one), acted so in the famous instance of the loving couple, each of whom, when separating, took the half of a broken mirror. The wife failed to keep her vow, and her half turned into a magpie

which flew and told the husband. Hence the custom of decorating mirrors with magpies. And they can reflect the heart's thoughts. The first Ch'in Emperor used to test his concubines with one, and executed those who failed to come through the ordeal.¹

Even at the present day 'spirit mirrors' can be purchased. Their reflection thrown upon a wall shows weird effects of shadow and light. But it has been suggested that 'spirits' had less to do with the phenomenon than the minute irregularities in the planes of the mirror's polished surface. In a very old mirror these might have been caused, after hundreds of years of polishing, through the pressure imprinting in vague outline on the surface the form of the raised decoration at the back. Yet any one who has seen the reflections from one of these 'spirit mirrors' can well sympathize with the name the Chinese have given to them.

The recognized principles of bronze-working had already been laid down. The *Chou li*, the famous code of State institutions, had its origins in the Chou dynasty, but in its present form may have been compiled under the Han. A section at the end sets out the right proportions for the composition of alloys of copper for bronze working and casting. After stating that copper is used in six proportions it goes on:

'When divided into six parts and one part is replaced with tin it is in the right proportion for bells and

¹ *Chinese Art*, Burlington Magazine Monograph, 'Bronzes', by W. Perceval Yetts, Batsford, 1925, p. 44. I am indebted to this work for much of the information given here.

cauldrons. When one part in five is replaced with tin it is in the right proportion for axes. One part of tin in four is suitable for halberds, and one in three for large swords and knives. When the copper is divided into five parts, and two are replaced with tin, it is in the right proportion for writing-knives and arrow-heads. An alloy of equal parts of the two metals is used for mirrors and specula.¹

Especially interesting is the *Chou li* reference to the writing-knife. This may refer to the pointed metal instrument or stylus used for inscribing on bamboo tablets the traditional ideographic script, on the other hand, those which have survived are curved, and it has been suggested that they were erasers.

It is clear from the above that empirical knowledge (but not a science) of metallurgy had progressed very far even in these early times. The absence of references to zinc, nickel, or antimony seems to indicate that traces of these metals went unrecognized because, since they always occurred in the copper ore mined in China, the craftsmen had never seen either literally pure copper or the other elements in a free state. They merely recognized that the copper mined in different districts had slightly differing colours (given by the presence of varying proportions of these impurities) and they therefore classed it as red, white, or grey-green. The probabilities are that the red was a naturally nearly pure copper, the white had a larger proportion of nickel, and the grey-green of tin.

¹ See note, p 74

Patina, that bluish-green bloom encrusting the surface of the more ancient bronzes, should have a chapter to itself. Briefly it is an efflorescence caused by the corrosion of the metallic surface during the course of centuries of time. The variation in its colouring is due to all sorts of fortuitous circumstances—the composition of the alloy, contact with other metals, with water, or with the differing chemical constituents in the differing kinds of earth in which the bronze may have lain. The more recent incrustations appear on the bronze face usually as a scattered mottling of bluish flecks like the bloom of a grape. The oldest (according to Chinese belief) is cherry red, which, often combined with malachite green and yellow, covers the entire surface of the most ancient bronzes. Patination, though an accidental after-effect, frequently heightens the aesthetic attraction of a piece, and its supposed guarantee of age used to add a practical appeal to the connoisseur. But the Chinese themselves have valued, scrutinized, and classified patinated bronze over a period of many centuries. As a natural result, fakers of antiques have discovered the most ingenious methods of mimicking this delightful defect so that nowadays the discriminating collector must often call in the scientist to help him to make a final decision. Most forgeries, however, are easily exposed because their foundation is a pigment which, unlike true patina, will blister when heated. If this test is inconclusive a portion of the

patina may have to be removed. If the incrustation is then seen to have bitten into the underlying surface it may be taken to be genuine (although even this incrustation may have been artificially encouraged), but if this surface is smooth it will be obvious that a faked patinous substance has been artificially applied.

The probable influence of the Scyths on the 'animal style' of decoration developed under the Chou has already been mentioned. But the somewhat changed form of the animal style which is associated with the Ch'in and early Han periods also seems to owe much to influences from these races, the Scyths and their successors the Sarmatians. Before this time gold seems to have been unknown in China, and as these races used it freely (and probably mined it in the Altai or Golden Mountains in Asia) it seems likely that it was through them the metal and knowledge of its aesthetic possibilities first reached China. Moreover it seems fair to assume that both the new form of animal style and the precious metal were introduced into China chiefly through the activities of the Ch'in. For, as we have seen, the region they occupied extended into the north-west and embraced the approach to the desert gateway to northern and central Asia. These tracts of Asia were roamed by the Hsiung-nu, Huns, and other nomadic tribes whose territory was a sort of clearing-house and through whose agency the animal style spread through Siberia, Russia, and northern Europe. Striking testimony to the truth of this theory has been

found in the tombs of northern Mongolia attributed to the first or second century B.C. From this site come the oldest examples of textiles, embroidered with well-known designs in the animal style, especially the *motif* of fabulous beasts in combat. This *motif* had been one of the most popular from very remote times. It occurs as early as 3000 B.C. in Mesopotamian carvings, then in Assyrian sculpture, and later in the art of Achaemenian Persia about the sixth to the fourth century B.C.

From this time onwards influences from still farther afield reach China. The conquests of Alexander the Great in Asia had left permanent effects through the introduction of Hellenic culture which continued to radiate from Greek settlements stationed as far apart as northern India and the Black Sea. Especially important was the semi-Grecian province of Bactria. In the second century B.C. the Hsiung-nu, the ancient enemies of China, had conquered the Indo-Scyths, who shortly afterwards conquered Bactria. All the races remained in contact with each other, and by this means Hellenic ideas percolated into China and influenced her art. These nomadic tribes were greedy for the superior culture of China on the east and Greece on the west, and it has since been shown that sometimes imports came direct from Greece itself. The effect of their catholic taste appears in the mixture of *motifs*, of materials, and objects in Mongolian tombs of this time. Hellenic *motifs* occur with Chinese in

quilted and embroidered carpets: there is silk damask with an archaic Chinese landscape pattern and another piece with Taoist *motifs* and with horses at a flying gallop—a feature popular in later Han art; Chinese lacquer in black with decoration in red, green, brown, and yellow; Scytho-Siberian metalwork in gold and bronze; a fragment of a Chinese bronze mirror, Siberian pottery and scores of other things which were all recovered from the same tomb. Of about the same date are the silk weavings recovered by Sir Aurel Stein from a cemetery site in the Lop desert in Chinese Turkistan. Later in this chapter Pliny's account of the excellence of Chinese iron is quoted and it will be noticed that his name for the Chinese was 'the Seres'. From this evolved the word Serica—Seric (or silk) clothing—since silk was the chief article of trade brought all the way from China across Asia to Rome. This 'silk road' was opened up late in the second century B.C. and the above-mentioned remains of very early silk weavings were unearthed from a tomb site at a point where the road passes through Chinese Turkistan. They probably date from the first century B.C. and they are therefore more or less contemporary with the textiles—quilted rugs and silk damasks—recovered from the Mongolian tombs. In design also these finds resemble each other. The ornament illustrates even more clearly than the decoration on bronzes the extraordinary survival for over two thousand years of such *motifs* as the horseman at the flying gallop, the

dragon, heraldic beasts in procession and animal ornament of various kinds, geometrical and floral patterns, and the cloud scroll. Respect for tradition and the symbolic meaning of these forms accounts for their persistence, and it is evident that they occurred throughout the next four hundred years although well-preserved examples have so far not been found. It is not, therefore, until the seventh century A.D., during the Tang dynasty, that sufficient material is available again to enable a description of textile art to be continued. From another tomb site, this time in Corea, approximately dated to late in the first century B.C., have come a large number of lacquered vessels beautifully decorated and bearing strong resemblance to the earlier find in northern Mongolia. Hundreds of years must have gone to the shaping of a technique as delicate and perfect as these models of craftsmanship display. For it is a technique which does not seem to have been often excelled, except in the field of ceramics, until well over a thousand years later.

Though the mural paintings of the time have perished there is clear evidence of their nature
Painting in written record

An early Chinese historian wrote of the early painter-poets and the beginnings of painting: 'When they could not express their thoughts (in painting) they made characters, and when they could not express shapes (in writing) they made paintings.' This attitude is repeated again and again by other Chinese

writers. In other words it meant that they had two languages. Just as at one time at the Court of England what was not readily expressed in English might be spoken in French, so it was with the two arts of the brush in China, and in the same way one language was partly derived from the other. As the earliest known paintings date from the second century of our era and as they show a finished technique and are not in any sense archaic it follows that the art of painting must have been practised in China for hundreds of years before that time. The scenes depicted by the painter in the palace of Prince Liu Yu, Duke of Lu in Shantung, 154-129 B.C. (the Ling-Kuang palace) were described by the poet Wang Yên-shou as follows: 'Heaven and Earth, strange spirits of the sea, gods of the hills, the five dragons with joined wings, Fu Hsi with his scaly body, Nu Wo with serpent limbs, Huang Ti, and the great Yu; furthermore the Three Kings and many riotous damsels and turbulent lords, loyal knights, dutiful sons, mighty scholars and faithful wives.'

Paintings of the same kind decorated the interiors of the more imposing tombs. Nothing remains of these, but fortunately their type is known because it was the custom to transmit records of famous paintings by carving copies in stone. The famous second-century bas-reliefs from Shantung are good examples. They are more valuable as representations of lost mural paintings than as examples of sculpture. No

doubt the stone reliefs were at times intended to be mural decorations in their own right, for some still retain traces of the pigments with which they were coloured. But later many were used and many more are still in use for taking impressions with ink on soft paper, so that numbers of reproductions in black and white were taken off in much the same way as collectors in our day have taken rubbings of English medieval brasses. Painted copies of mural decorations were perhaps also made on silk and paper, although Chinese histories do not record the use of paper before the first century A.D., and probably the now common scroll paintings did not become popular before that time.

Other records on stone were made not by raising the figures in relief but by carving out and engraving into the surface of the stone, while still others are in the form of large bricks with the figures stamped or engraved. All these representations show little attempt at perspective or the suggestion of space and depth. The figures are generally in profile and the simplest methods are employed to indicate the clash or combination of groups, but the drawing is exact and full of life and rhythm. The subjects depicted were still largely legendary, Taoist fables and old tales of heroism being especially popular.

Gradually the custom grew of painting portraits of great men of the past. Towards the end of the Western Han dynasty and throughout the Eastern Han this

phase persisted, and the patron of the arts, Ming Ti, is the chief among many emperors of the latter dynasty who, so history relates, commissioned paintings of Confucius and his disciples and other famous figures. It is, again, to versions cut in stone that knowledge of this portrait style is due. The precision and delicacy of line with which every essential is expressed, whether the softness and volume of drapery or the character shown in a face, is remarkable. Remarkable too is the expressive absence of this line where a less talented artist would have added the obvious and unnecessary. Though linear in method the final effect is of a Giottoesque mass and grandeur. These copies in stone are conclusive evidence of the mastery of sensitive brushwork which the painters of the lost originals had already achieved. But though the paintings have gone it is still possible to judge their quality of colour from the very beautiful pieces of painted lacquer which have been discovered in tombs of the period, both those mentioned above in northern Korea, which in the Han dynasty was a part of China, and elsewhere. Birds, animals, and human figures occur in these examples and the characteristically free and nervous line is enriched by the range of extremely delicate colours of the time.

The buildings which were decorated by these paintings, carpets, silk hangings, gold and silver, *Architecture* bronze and lacquer-work, are known through the records in literature, but no ruins of palaces and

temples have come down to us. The written accounts show that they were founded on the models left by Shih Huang Ti, but their huge scale could not guarantee their survival, since both in substance and constructional form they were inevitably perishable. No satisfactory reason has been given for the age-long Chinese preference for impermanent timber over the stone and brick of the monumental architecture found in every other great civilization. Stone was not scarce and the Chinese were as expert at firing brick as they were in making pottery, yet timber was preferred for all but great engineering works like bridges, towers, and military defences. Even the walled city was actually protected by earthworks which only later were encased with a façade of brickwork. The same thing was true of the Great Wall of China. Its bricks are found to bear the seals of later emperors, for the rampart of Shih Huang Ti was throughout most of its length a colossal earthen embankment which, with its slopes filled in, still forms the core of the later brick and battlemented wall. It was thus, too, that the Roman Emperor Hadrian threw up his breastwork across Britain as a defence against the Picts: the stone revetment was completed by Severus although the whole was (and its ruin still is) known as Hadrian's wall. The above-mentioned Shantung bas-reliefs show two or three examples of architecture which strongly resemble traditional modern forms, with the notable exception that the slopes of the low-pitched tiled roofs

are straight, not gently concave as in later times. However, overhanging wood-bracketed eaves are indicated, as well as widely spaced wood columns. There is no doubt that the ever-popular rammed earth was also in use in Han times, especially as the foundation platform often extended to form a terrace surrounding the buildings. Brick and stone facings would be used here, and stone, bronze, or iron bases were put down for the columns. But the superposed structure was all of wood. A series of bays, formed with ranks of tall timber posts reaching to the roof and more or less equidistant from each other, were connected lengthwise by wood lintels and transversely by the horizontal roof beams. Above these came the roof-timbers, rafters, and tiles. Small wonder that in course of erection a Chinese building resembles at one time a forest of masts and at another a gargantuan game of spillikins. The bays of columns stand free without cross bracing and the roof beams have no diagonal struts. When covered with heavy earthenware tiles the whole of this framework stands on its wooden stilts and is held down solely by the weight of its roof and an undue reliance on Providence. Since there are no struts, braces, or buttresses to counteract diagonal movement the rectangular framing is likely to collapse lengthways in a hurricane or a slight earthquake unless it is burnt to the ground in a fire. If it escapes these mischances, eventually the wood carcase will rot unless kept continually in repair. Yet the

Chinese remained satisfied with such primitive, vulnerable structures and even added to their risks by using wood panelling generally for internal partitions and often for external walls. This explains the total disappearance of all the great buildings of a date prior to our era and of the great majority constructed during the next fifteen hundred years. In the temples of Greece and Rome the masonry has survived to some extent the attacks of time, of fire, and of armies crazed with fear or conquest, but the timber-pillared halls of coeval Chinese civilization scarcely survived from dynasty to dynasty.

There are many ingenious reasons put forward to account for this extraordinary preference for temporary building materials. One explains that they were cheaper and easier to procure as well as easier to build with. This is true of rammed earth, which had the additional advantage of being a very ancient and well-tried mode of building. At first sight timber also seems to answer to this description, but as a matter of fact trees sufficiently large to convert into columns for any but small buildings were scarce and their transport was expensive. Probably, however, the custom of using posts and beams of wood developed gradually in early days and the technique of jointing and erection improved slowly, keeping pace for a time with the modest degree of accommodation required in a primitive community. But with the vast building schemes of Shih Huang Ti and the palaces of the Han emperors

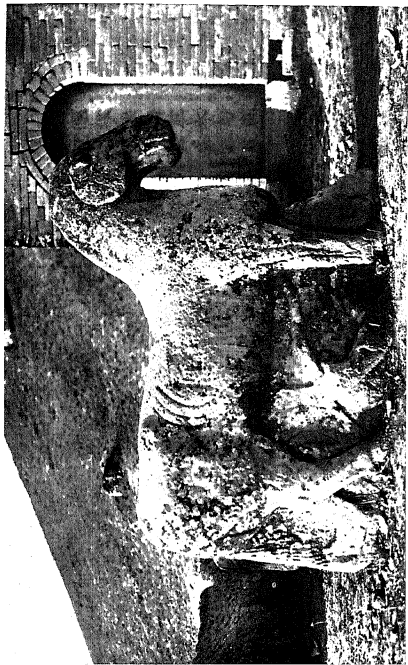
the demand for loftiness and wide-spanned spaces must have over-taxed the forest resources of the new empire. Yet in spite of this, wood remained the favourite building material.

The Han period was noteworthy for a revival of learning and the growth of lexicography, poetry, calligraphy and painting, besides the development in the crafts of the lacquer- and metal-worker, the potter, and the weaver. All these activities were aided by a freer communication with western civilizations, due largely to the travels of the celebrated Chinese envoy Chang Ch'ien at the end of the second century B.C. They are recorded by the great Chinese historian of the time, Ssü-ma Ch'ien, 'The Herodotus of China'. While Chang Ch'ien failed in his original mission to conclude an alliance with the Indo-Scyths he brought back news of the countries of western Asia, especially of Hellenized regions such as north-east Bactria and Ferghāna. Through his agency the grape-vine was introduced into China and though at this date it does not occur in art, it appears a few hundred years later. But the most epoch-making discovery he made in Ferghāna was that of the so-called Supernatural Horses (possibly descendants of the famous Nisaeon breed) which were so superior in size, grace, and fleetness to the short-legged pony of Mongolia that the Emperor Wu immediately coveted them. They were eventually introduced in great numbers and a record of their Grecian nobility of form is preserved in many representations,

the chief occurring in the pottery models from Han and later tombs. The Emperor's first plan had been to form an alliance with the Indo-Scyths in order to cripple the power of the traditional enemy the Hsiung-nu. When Chang Ch'ien returned unsuccessful but with news of the Supernatural Horses the Emperor conceived an even more ambitious plan. He decided to secure them for his cavalry stud so that with superior mounted forces he might finally defeat the Hsiung-nu single-handed. In 121 B.C. his young general Ho Chu-p'ing had achieved the last of several victories, but he died in the same hour. Guarding his great tomb in the Wei valley still stand the stone sculpture groups showing a horse trampling on a barbarian.

Although to some degree, then, Wu succeeded, yet the outstanding result of the colossally wasteful military expeditions he sent against Ferghāna was the freeing of lines of communication and the opening up of trade with western civilizations.¹ Imports from the Roman Empire, and especially from Syria, included glass, although this material, as stated previously, may also have been made independently in China at the end of the Chou dynasty. It has even been suggested that the similarity of the typical green lead glaze of Han pottery with Egyptian glazed ware argues that the latter also was imported by the Chinese. But this does not seem likely, for other Egyptian glazes and the

¹ 'The Horse; a Factor in Early Chinese History', W. Perceval Yetts, *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, ix, 1934.



Stone Statue of a Horse Trampling on a Barbarian. Han sculpture group from the tomb of the young general Ho Chü-p'ing, in the Wei valley. Musée Guimet, Paris.

technique of enamelling stone do not appear. The Chinese method of studding bronzes with gem-like insets of glass or scooping out hollows and engraving lines for an inlay of coloured lacquers (but not glass enamels) continued. In enamelling, the barbarian Celts in Britain seem to have forestalled the Chinese in discovering the technique of 'pouring colours upon heated brass which adhere and become as hard as stone'—as runs the Roman record of the early years of our era. The exports from China to the Roman Empire included silk and iron. The latter seems to have maintained a successful competition with the local product, for as late as A.D. 77 Pliny wrote in his *Natural History*. 'But of all the different kinds of iron, the palm of excellence is awarded to that which is made by the Seres.' ('The Seres' was the name given by the Romans to the Chinese)¹ Pliny's testimony is borne out by the large objects of finely made cast iron of this period, in particular a well-preserved cooking stove, which have been found in Han tombs.

The successful campaign against Ferghāna to secure the Supernatural Horses set out across Asia in 102 B.C. By the desert route thus opened up Buddhism entered China exactly a hundred years later. The year 2 B.C. is usually recognized as the auspicious year, but there are other legends current. One states that two hundred years before, Shih

¹ 'Wrought Iron', Maxwell Ayrton and Arnold Silcock, *Country Life*, 1929, p. 3

Huang-ti had imprisoned an itinerant Buddhist missionary. Another tells that a hundred years later some golden statues of the Buddha were looted from the Hsiung-nu by Ho Chu-p'ing, the young commander of the Emperor Wu's successful campaign; but these may have been figures of ancestors, for the Hsiung-nu also practised ancestor-worship. A third reference records that Buddhist doctrine was preached in 6 B.C., but disbelieved. Yet Buddhism was practised as an organized religion little more than fifty years later. Although it was recognized at court, it did not make great headway at first, and its influence on art was negligible.

The earlier or Western Han had been a period of unparalleled imperial expansion, of foreign trade and prosperity, and of great achievements in the arts. But it closed in misfortune and chaos. The dynasty fell with the 'socialist' Wang Mang's interregnum of A.D. 9-25. Once more the dreaded nomads swept down and dismembered the central Asian possessions of the Han.

Description of Fig. 8.

From one of the fragments of polychrome silk of the Han period recovered by Sir Aurel Stein. Specimen of the earliest surviving examples of Chinese silk industry and textile art
(See pages 79-80.) Drawing by Mr. F. H. Andrews

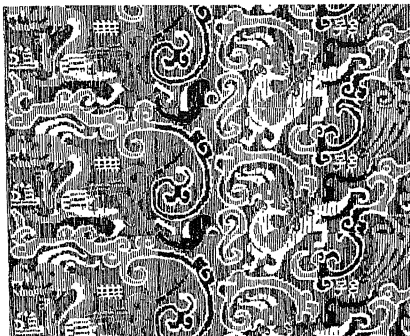


FIG. 8. TEXTILE: HERALDIC BEASTS IN PROCESSION.

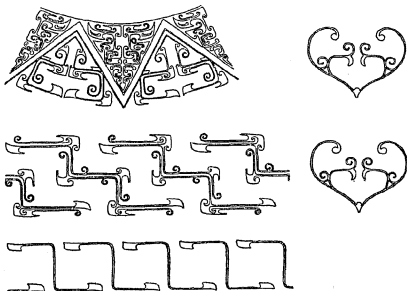


FIG. 9. BANDS OF GEOMETRICAL INLAID ORNAMENT ON A BRONZE BOTTLE-SHAPED VASE.

Han dynasty. (See pages 71-2 and 95.)

V

EASTERN HAN DYNASTY, A.D. 25-220

DAY DREAMS¹

By Tso Ssu (third century A.D.)

WHEN I was young I played with a soft brush
And was passionately devoted to reading all sorts of books
In prose I made Chia I my standard
In verse I imitated Ssü-ma Hsiang-ju
But then the arrows began singing at the frontier
And a winged summons came flying to the City
Although arms were not my profession,
I had once read Jang-Chu's war-book
I shouted aloud and my cries rent the air.
I felt as though Tung Wu were already annihilated.
The scholar's knife cuts best at its first use
And my dreams hurried on to the completion of my plan
I wanted at a stroke to clear the Yang-tze and Hsiang,
And at a glance to quell the Tibetans and Hu
When my task was done, I should not accept a barony,
But refusing with a bow, retire to a cottage in the country.

AFTER a period of disorder a new dynasty arose,
styled the later, or Eastern Han. China again
became united and successful, but it took more than
Spread of fifty years to repair the damage to the empire
Education and reconquer the states in Asia. In A.D.
and of 67 the Emperor Ming's envoy to the Indo-
Buddhism Scyths brought back two Buddhist priests. Other
missionaries followed and during this dynasty the
advocates of Buddhism slowly spread and mingled,

¹ 170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, p. 66.

in that curious spirit of phlegmatic tolerance common to the English and the Chinese, with the adherents of Taoism and Confucianism. For centuries the religions borrowed outward ritualistic forms and theological ideas from each other. In the way typical of China, she changed and then absorbed a Buddhism compatible with her pre-existing convictions.

This epoch is notable too for the developments in ceramics and in the arts of calligraphy and painting, and portrait painting was especially encouraged by the Emperor Ming. *Calligraphy* With the opening of the Eastern Han period came the invention of paper, another aid to the diffusion of these arts. Experiments were made with silk rags, bark, roots of herbs, and other substances, but whatever the type the result seems always to have been a paper unusually soft and absorbent. Both the oldest examples and the modern stuff more nearly resemble blotting-paper than the stiff, close-textured material in use in the West. This sponge-like quality must be borne in mind when judging the technical excellence of either brush-writing or the characteristic line brush-drawing which grew from it. For the absorption of the paper (and, to a less degree, of silk which still continued in use) made it impossible successfully to erase or correct a single stroke, so that each composition was first completely visualized in the imagination of the artist and then transcribed with faultless accuracy and feeling in a series of rapid brush-strokes.

In China the delicacy of hand necessary for the execution of accurate yet sensitive line came naturally to the child as he learnt to draw the classic characters. At the same time an unconscious capacity for design and composition showed itself, for every character is a lesson in building up a design, and each grouping of characters into a poem, or indeed into a mere letter, is a display of the power of composition. And when it is remembered that each group of characters was not only an exercise in technical dexterity but a picture conveying an intrinsic meaning, poetical, ethical, or only perhaps complimentary to the reader, it is easy to account for the spiritual meaning with which the early Chinese painters charged their handiwork. In the East the foundation of the child's schooling was classical literature, noble thoughts memorized and transcribed in the beautiful ideographic script. But in the West there existed no such universal medium combining a training in art and ethics founded on the finest classical models. First of all the Chinese painter-poets were great writers—great calligraphers—and only later in time did they turn to the drawing of pictures as a medium to interpret thoughts and feelings inexpressible in words. It does not, then, seem curious to the Chinese to honour a great painter first because he is a great calligrapher—an exponent of the elder art of writing—and only second because he is an exponent of the later art of painting.

As we have seen, Indian ink, or rather what was

actually the same thing, Chinese ink, was the medium and colour was not popular. Even washes were used quite rarely in painting, and in calligraphy, of course, not at all. Since Chinese paintings are literally ink drawings done with a brush, and since the technique developed from writing with a brush, the result is an art of line. Both arts imply absolute mastery of brushwork, and the finest drawings can express action, space, and volume by means of line alone. In examples where colours are used they are generally washes light in tone and sparingly applied, chosen chiefly with an eye to their reinforcement of the all-essential line. Neither does light and shade cloud the effect, for Chinese art ignores shadows, and tricks of high light contrasted with darkness have never disturbed its serenity. Few masters of European painting disclose a similar approach to their art except perhaps Botticelli. His 'Birth of Venus', for instance, displays a Chinese harmony of flowing line enhanced by subdued yet subtle colouring which is rare in the West. On the other hand the work of Rembrandt, rich in colour, dazzling in its mastery of chiaroscuro, offers the most striking contrast with the paintings of the Far East. In the West painting became enslaved to the habit of representing things as they are seen by the eye, but in the East it began by expressing thoughts which the painter-poet could not convey by the written word, and so became the art of presenting things which are invisible except to the eye of the soul.

Chinese painting, therefore, was always a medium for the communication of ideas, and as such it was a natural development from picture writing, the earliest mode of recording ideas. The art of writing, which may be likened to the bud, broke into full flower with painting.

According to Chinese usage calligraphy and painting come under the heading of the fine arts, and curiously enough sculpture, bronze-work, and modeling—the plastic arts—do not. The development of writing as a fine art has already been mentioned—the early picture-writing inscriptions on tortoise-shell or bronze, &c., the Great Seal characters, the evolution of the writing-brush, the Lesser Seal characters, and other forms of script—but following these occurred a simplification in the construction of the characters during the Han dynasty. Already in the first two or three centuries of our era there were famous calligraphists whose names have been handed down to later generations. One of them, named T'sai Yung, who lived in the mid-second century A.D., laid down nine rules for the art of writing called the Nine Influences, which correspond in calligraphy to the Six Canons in painting evolved later. Then came the Model Style of writing, an improvement created by one of the most famous calligraphists, Wang Hsi-chih, and this, with slight variations, has been in use ever since. Mention of these modifications in the characters may have given the impression that the

earlier styles soon became unintelligible to later eyes, but this is not so. Each change was slight, and from time to time the classics were transcribed in the new style.

In the West it is difficult to trace the first steps in the evolution of writing owing to the revolutionary changes brought about by the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet and the continuous impact of fresh influences in the crowded Mediterranean world. In China, however, there was no revolutionary change. The language never became alphabetic, nor were modifications drastically or continuously imposed by foreign nations. The characters, which are only symbols or a combination of symbols representing things or ideas, were slightly changed in appearance but kept their original meanings. In exactly the same way the words in European languages were slightly changed in appearance through the invention of printing, but kept their original meanings. So the student who lived in China in the brush and ink age could still understand the writings of the great masters of literature who lived centuries before his time. This is why Chinese characters are such a perfect medium for what Lionel Giles has called 'the living of thought'. Again, wood-block printing was invented in China long before the process was discovered in Europe, but once more the form of the characters remained with almost no change. It is, therefore, perfectly true to say that the Chinese have always had an endless store of

wisdom readily available from the earliest times to the present day. Moreover, as the written language was not subject to the changes which occur in alphabetic languages it remained and unified the whole nation. For all men could understand each other through the medium of writing even when differences in spoken dialects made conversation impossible. A practically unchanging ideographic script has been the chief factor in the preservation of the body of Chinese culture. Other factors were China's geographical vastness and comparative isolation, the sense of stability engendered by the balanced and moral conception of the universe within which the patriarchal system and the theory of government which grew from it were encompassed. During the Han dynasty this stability was further emphasized by the social system, for the community was divided into two main classes, a vast scattered population of free peasant landowners controlled by local groups of cultured officials with the emperor as supreme head.

The craft of the potter had not as yet found full expression. The honoured position held by *Pottery* the highly developed craft of bronze-working overshadowed all the plastic arts so that they were too apt to strive after an imitation of the forms and even the colours of bronze. None the less the potters were astonishingly successful within these self-imposed limitations, which seem to have had for their object the delusion of their patrons into mistaking a pot for

PLATE IV



Hill Jar in Green Glazed Pottery. Han Period. Victoria and
Albert Museum.

its bronze counterpart. Thus, the original parts played by these two materials were now completely reversed: whereas archaic bronzes imitated earlier pottery forms, now pottery imitated bronze. The beginnings of this tendency occur in the Chou period and they were noted in Chapter III. On earthenware the only glazes were brown and green. Bottle-shaped vases with a pair of ring handles, exactly mimicking the bronze vases recovered from early Han tombs, are commonly found. So are the types known as the hill censers and hill jars. These owe their origin to the Taoist fable of the Isles of the Blest, the sea-encircled mountains on which dwelt those who had attained immortality. As far back as the time of Shih Huang T1 this fable had so entranced the Chinese imagination that he sent a magician with a fleet of ships to search for these islands. Then the great emperor of the Western Han, Wu T1, became an ardent believer, and later his example was followed by rulers in this, the Eastern Han, period. The hill censers had covers made to represent one of the mountainous islands with waves washing the base. Perforations through the cover allowed the incense-smoke to escape and the lower portion was a plain unglazed censer bowl, generally raised on a slender stem with a saucer-shaped foot. This, it is thought, was intended to heighten the effect of a mountain surrounded by water. As with other pottery, the usual material was a buff or a cinder-grey earthenware either plain or with

a green lead glaze enriching the more important surfaces. The green was provided by some compound of copper and, while the glaze is of a beautiful, unblemished brilliancy, yet this very perfection only serves to emphasize the fact that the potters of the time could not (or at least did not) make any colours except brown, brownish-green, and green. The decorative *motifs* run largely to vigorously executed hunting scenes, horses at the 'flying gallop', and archers on horseback, some of which represent combats in which the enemy troops wear the Scythian high peaked cap and riding costume. It is obvious that, following the introduction of the Supernatural Horses, chariots had fallen into disuse and the new mounted squadrons had become as important in war as mounted hunters had always been in the chase. The methods of applying the ornament were first to press the clay into moulds, the sunken designs of which afterwards stood out in relief on the surface of the ware, or to impress strips with decoration separately and attach them to the ware later; or merely to stamp them.

But besides the typical examples already mentioned there are quantities of pottery objects recovered from graves which show little or no resemblance to bronze forms. These include models of hunting and watch dogs and of all sorts of household utensils and fittings from ovens to well-heads. Much has been learnt from them concerning the daily life of the time, and it has even been possible to reconstruct with the aid

of such finds the typical farmstead with its courtyards, buildings, implements, and animals. The Chinese say that the first true porcelain was made during this period, but while some examples of porcellaneous wares may date from the second century A.D. definite proof is wanting. It is true, however, that wares *in the style* of Han art and with most of the characteristics of porcelain have been found, so that the gradual discovery of the technique was obviously progressing more rapidly by the end of the Eastern Han epoch. It is equally obvious that previous evolution had been exceedingly slow. Different types evolved in different epochs and then died out, and during the course of hundreds of years some of these types approached in their technical characteristics those of true porcelain. One thing is certain, namely that porcelain was not the invention of one man but the unexpected culmination of generations of effort to produce merely a harder and finer sort of glazed earthenware. Towards the close of the Eastern Han period this fine ware had so improved that for the first time it was given a special name to distinguish it from the softer, coarser pottery. The new name was *tz'ü*. At first it merely designated these finer wares, and as their quality gradually improved the name continued to be applied to them. So when the potters' efforts were crowned with complete success in the seventh century A.D. the same word *tz'ü* came at last to mean true porcelain also, and it is still used for all porcellaneous wares at the

present day The qualities ultimately perfected were a hard, thin ware with which a transparent coat of glaze would combine to produce a lustrous, smooth, and translucent vessel. Another quality achieved was that the ware gave out a musical note when struck. None of these characteristics were perfected by the Han potters, but they did achieve a remarkable degree of hardness, thinness, and transparency of glazing over an opaque body. The chemical constituents of these wares prove to be almost identical with those of porcelain and they exhibit a new grey-green glaze.

In the meantime the art of the painter, unlike that of the potter, was rapidly developing. The *Painting* primitive period, in which the artist was evidently reluctant to attempt perspective or the depiction of figures except in a side view, was soon superseded. At the close of the Eastern Han dynasty ceremonies in which large numbers of people took part had become a popular subject. The same economy of line is noticeable, but the groups are definitely massed to form a pleasing composition. Instead of the old fear of emptiness, spaces boldly left unfilled emphasize the importance of the figures. For the first time is seen that peculiarly Chinese convention in rendering perspective, where the spectator looks down at the figures which are posed as if on an open stage. The effect of depth and perspective is obtained not by the receding lines of the plinth and cornice of an architectural setting, for these are usually entirely

PLATE V



Men in Conversation. Painting of the late Han period. From the Han dynasty tomb bricks now in the Boston Museum.

omitted, but in the simplest way—by the oblique outlines of a mat on which the figures are grouped, or of one or two boxes placed in the foreground. The outlines, however, do not recede to a vanishing-point, nor are they necessarily merely parallel, but often compromise between the two. The demand for portraits and contemporary scenes from daily life encouraged the artist to observe and record realistic expressions and gestures with a truth to nature not required in the earlier paintings of mythological subjects. He rose nobly to the occasion, and before the close of the period had developed a technique astounding in its simplicity, breadth of treatment, and modernity of feeling. The tomb paintings on a series of brick slabs which are now in the Boston Museum provide the finest examples of this supreme expression of Han art.¹

These drawings show the final emancipation of Han painting. No hint of a primitive art remains, though flat and simple as the most archaic relief they announce a sophistication as complete and effortless as it is dazzling. They were probably executed about A.D. 200, yet it would be difficult to find painting of similar type and date in the West superior to them. The productions of Greek art show finished perfection, but they provide no parallel with these brilliant sketches. They illustrate perfectly the mastery which tireless practice with the writing-brush conferred, and

¹ *A History of Early Chinese Painting*, O. Sirén, vol. 1, p. 9

it was in the twin arts of brush-writing and brush-drawing that the latter part of the Han epoch was supreme.

Sculpture also shows considerable changes in out-look, but these are due more to ideas which flowed in from Western countries than to normal aesthetic growth. The influences are seen especially in the lithe, attenuated lines of animal sculpture. The heavy, archaic forms have given way to the 'flying gallop', the dragon poised for flight, and a further exaggeration of the lissom, leaping figures of heraldic beasts. The whole of Asia recognized the Han empire as paramount, and embassies with gifts and traders with rich merchandise frequently came and went. Even from Rome itself the merchants came, adding their quota to the growing knowledge of foreign products and foreign culture.

The stone reliefs from Shantung have already been referred to as copies, perhaps, of mural paintings of an earlier time, and as illustrations of a style of architecture which has prevailed ever since. They date from the first half of the second century A.D. and come from the Wu Liang tombs. Like most surviving pieces of this date they are examples of funerary sculpture, examples which give evidence of the costly funeral customs of the period. These entailed not only the provision of a stone vault, carved with panels in relief, but of columns and figures of animals set up before the tomb. The larger the tomb the more prodigal

was the expenditure on these statues. The columns are often of great interest because they also show details of the wood architecture of the time done in stone, proving that the buildings in wood, which have long since disappeared, were constructed on principles which have persisted till the present day. A characteristic of Han sculpture is the lack of importance given to the human body. Where it occurs the figure and costume are treated as a unity, and not as an anatomical study in which the drapery indicates and emphasizes the bodily structure it veils. In reliefs, the silhouette, or in the round, the mass seems the important factor, and this, allied with imperious vigour and a scorning of meticulous truth to nature or to distracting detail, governs all the branches of glyptic art.

In spite of the rarity of contemporary examples it is evident that the four hundred years of the two Han dynasties saw a very rapid advance in evolution, although perhaps less in bronze and sculpture than in calligraphy and painting. Contact with Western civilizations was maintained for an almost unbroken period of two centuries before Christ, and two centuries after His birth. But although the empire became the paramount state in Asia it fell before internal dissension and the rapacity of rival military usurpers, who ultimately parcelled out the land between them.



FIG. 10. RECEPTION OF THE EMPEROR MU WANG BY HSI WANG MU (THE 'ROYAL MOTHER OF THE WEST' OF TAOIST LEGEND).

Mu Wang is the large figure seated below and Hsi Wang Mu, wearing a coronet head-dress, is seated on the floor above. Note typical features of Han architecture: the straight slopes of the roofs and the columns with brackets, and, above, the caryatides—carved human figures—supporting roofs. (*See pages 84-5.*) From part of an inked squeeze of a carved stone relief of the second century A.D. (Han dynasty) from Shantung. Drawn by the Author.

VI

PERIOD OF THE THREE KINGDOMS AND THE DIVISION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

A D 220-536

THE DESECRATION OF THE HAN TOMBS¹

By CHANG TSAI (*third century A D*)

At Pei-mang how they rise to Heaven,
Those high mounds, four or five in the fields¹
What men lie buried under these tombs?
All of them were Lords of the Han world
'Kung' and 'Wên'² gaze across at each other
The Yuan mound is all grown over with weeds
When the dynasty was falling, tumult and disorder arose,
Thieves and robbers roamed like wild beasts
Of earth³ they have carried away more than one handful,
They have gone into vaults and opened the secret doors.
Jewelled scabbards lie twisted and defaced
The stones that were set in them, thieves have carried away,
The ancestral temples are hummocks in the ground
The walls that went round them are all levelled flat.
Over everything the tangled thorns are growing
A herd-boy pushes through them up the path
Down in the thorns rabbits have made their burrows
The weeds and thistles will never be cleared away
Over the tombs the ploughshare will be driven
And peasants will have their fields and orchards there.
They that were once lords of a thousand hosts
Are now become the dust of the hills and ridges
I think of what Yun-mên⁴ said
And am sorely grieved at the thought of 'then' and 'now'

¹ 170 Chinese Poems, Arthur Waley, p. 67

² Names of two tombs

³ In the early days of the dynasty a man stole a handful of earth from the imperial tombs, and was executed by the police. The emperor was furious at the lightness of the punishment

⁴ Yun-mên said to Mêng Ch'ang-chun (died 279 B C), 'Does it not grieve you to think that after a hundred years this terrace will be cast down and this pond cleared away?' Mêng Ch'ang-chun wept

AS we have seen, the introduction of Buddhism, which at first made little progress, had practically no influence upon the development of art throughout the later or Eastern Han dynasty. The

*The Heroic Age
The Three King-
doms A D 220-
280, approxi-
mately*

first Chinese Buddhist monk was ordained about A D. 180, the first recorded Buddhist temple was erected in A D. 190, and the Han period closed amidst the confusion of civil war in A D. 220. In the West the third century saw the Goths, Franks, and Vandals successfully harrying the Roman Empire which till now had also enjoyed two hundred years of peace. China was similarly threatened by powerful enemies from the north, but in the south the new religion began to make great strides, especially in the state of Wu. The land was now divided into three parts and for approximately half a century the Three Kingdoms, Wei, Shu Han, and Wu flourished simultaneously.

The heroic figure of the time is Liu Pei whose great bronze war-drums at Ch'êng-tu were mentioned in Chapter III. The children who play in the shade of his grave-mound, which rises above the bamboo grove beside the temple, all know the legend of the hero to whom they belonged. Liu Pei was a poor seller of straw sandals and mats, who by his genius, bravery, and steadfastness rose to be the conqueror of that country, the land of Shu, now the far western province of Ssü-ch'uan. In all his enterprises he was counselled and supported by a statesman, Chu-Ko Liang (whose



Bronze War Drum or Chu-Ko Ku. Drums of this form were so named after Chu-Ko Liang, sworn brother and adviser of the famous founder of the Shu Han dynasty, Liu Pei, whose drum of similar pattern is preserved at Ch'êng-tu, Ssü-ch'uan. Another in the British Museum is cast with the date A.D. 226, the period of the second emperor of the dynasty. This drum is about the same date or earlier. Note the frogs, probably relics of tribal totems. Height $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches. British Museum. *See also page 42.*

lyre still hangs on the wall of the same temple), and by two brothers who became his trusted generals. One of these has since been deified for his valour under the name Kuan Ti, the Chinese God of War. The loyalty of these 'sworn brothers' has been the theme of epic story and the ideal of friendship ever since

In A D 247 the famous priest Sêng-hui arrived and in his successful mission converted, among other distinguished persons, Ts'ao Pu-hsing, the court painter of the Wu kingdom. He and other celebrated painters of the period added a new impetus to the spread of Buddhism through the agency of their religious paintings, but none of their works has survived and many must have been destroyed in the great persecutions of Buddhism which occurred later. It is therefore impossible to evaluate the critical appreciation of later Chinese art critics. Little is known about the art of the third century owing to the confusion into which the country was plunged by anarchy and wars with the Hsiung-nu. But during this time—legend states—the first pagoda was built at Nanking, which, in later times, was also the site of the famous Porcelain Pagoda.

At the beginning of the fourth century the Hsiung-nu were defeated by the emperor of the reigning Chin dynasty, which followed the short-lived period of the Three Kingdoms. An ally, chieftain of the T'o-pa (Toba) Tartars, actually won the day and was consequently made a minister. Later he established a kingdom. His

*The Division
of North and
South, A D
386-589*

House increased in power for three generations, when a descendant defeated the Chinese forces and declared himself emperor, taking the title Wei from the previous native dynasty of that name.

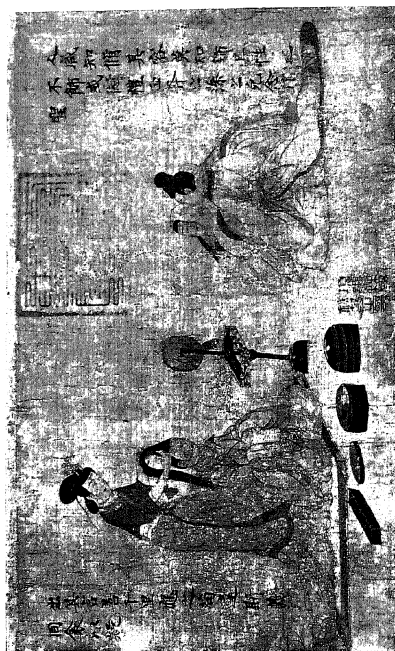
In the Western world the Roman Empire was tottering while this Tartar Empire was being established, for in A. D. 410 Alaric, king of the Visigoths, the northern barbarians of Europe, was finally victorious. In China the victors were neither so powerful nor so *The Tartar* ruthless. The T'o-pa Tartars, or Northern *Emperors* Wei, as they are now styled, came from the extreme north of Asia, the region of Lake Baikal, in Siberia, and though not entirely uncivilized they were uncouth and unlettered. It is not surprising, therefore, that they left no monuments with inscriptions in their own language, nor that they took Chinese names and adopted the culture of the people they had conquered. But it is surprising, perhaps, that under their protection arose the first and greatest school of Buddhist sculpture. The explanation is to be found in the Chinese capacity for absorbing foreign elements into their traditional culture. And, much as the sundew flower absorbs a fly, the essence only was absorbed and digested while the husk was left. This capacity seems to have grown with the centuries. The phenomenon was repeated with the Mongols, later with the Manchus, and it may well happen again. So far as the Northern Wei are concerned, they provided little but a settled government and encouragement

to the Buddhist religion. As nomads, what art they had was either primitive and applied—crafts elaborating accoutrements and costume—or borrowed from established civilizations. But their support of Buddhism released a new flood of inspiration for the native craftsmen, members of the vanquished race who yet were victors in everything but name. The prodigal expenditure on religious monuments and furniture is proved by the numbers of specimens which still survive, especially the cave-shrine, giant images of Buddha, carved from the solid rock, while the sincerity of religious feeling lives on in the serene smiling faces of their statues. There are pieces dating from A.D. 390 onwards, but owing to the ravages of time, wars, and persecutions, fourth-century examples are very rarely found. It was in the latter half of this century, however, that the construction of the first cave-shrines was begun in China. They were undertaken by the celebrated monk Lo Tsun after he had seen a vision of a thousand Buddhas, and the caves are named after this vision. Tun-Huang, China's far north-western gateway to the trade-routes across the central Asian deserts, was the site, and although the original shrine has disappeared, pilgrims and travellers have visited the other carved and painted caves for centuries. Their rich treasures are described by Sir Aurel Stein in *Serindia*, and reproductions of the paintings are given by Professor Paul Pelliot in *Les Grottes de Touen-houang*.

Equally important are the paintings which were now being made at the other end of China, some of which have survived. The great figure of this period is Ku K'ai-chih, the most famous of the early painters whose names and works are known. He lived in the south, probably between A.D. 350 and 400. He was an artist in life as well as in paint, a man of parts, intellectual, and gifted with a great sense of humour. This quality enlivens many of his works. 'It was commonly said that K'ai-chih was a threefold genius, exceeding in wit, in painting, and in foolishness!' So runs the description of him in one of the old Chinese books. Though the school of landscape painters did not evolve until more than three hundred years later, so far as is known Ku K'ai-chih was the first to use mountains, rivers, and trees as the indispensable setting and background for some of his subjects. This is all the more astonishing when it is remembered that a similar correlation of figures with natural scenery (as in 'The Hunter' by Ku K'ai-chih) did not occur in the West until late in the Italian Renaissance. 'The Tempest' by Giorgione has been described as the forerunner of the first school of landscape painting in Europe, and Giorgione lived at the close of the fifteenth century—eleven hundred years after Ku K'ai-chih. Giorgione's love of nature was to save Italian art from becoming sensual. But in China art had never suffered this danger. Ku K'ai-chih merely

*Southern Art
Ku K'ai-chih
and the
Painters*

PLATE VII



'Ladies at their Toilet.' Painting in ink with washes of subdued colour on pale brown silk. By Ku K'ai-chih, ? Late 4th century A.D. Height of roll, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum.

gave expression to the love of nature and feeling of oneness with the universe which had for centuries been implicit in the Chinese attitude to life

The primitive essays at painting landscape were often made on scrolls which, when unrolled, gave a long narrow picture, a literal panorama of hills and winding streams which formed the naturalistic setting for the figures and their story. Great sense of space and atmosphere was thus given even upon a horizontal scroll only a few inches in height and meant to be unfolded a foot or so at a time. The most celebrated of the master's works was a silk scroll with a series of scenes known as 'The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies'. Each scene illustrates a passage of the 'admonitions' with which the scroll is inscribed. For instance, 'The Hunter', already referred to, shows in the foreground a kneeling man who draws his bow at a bird poised above the rocks at the foot of a distant mountain. The text reads. 'In nature there is nothing high which is not soon brought down.' The most famous of the groups represents 'Ladies at their Toilet'. Its text reads: 'Men and women know how to adorn their persons, but few know how to embellish their souls'. The mastery of composition and the imaginative power displayed in these drawings is astounding. They are executed in decisive yet delicate line and the contours are filled in with washes of quiet colour. In character they are reminiscent of the sketches on the Han tomb bricks in the

Boston Museum, but they are more finished. They show too that (as in the last-named sketches) the ideal of feminine beauty was still light and graceful. Although a few inches only in height and intended merely as illustrations for an accompanying text, these groups alone have been sufficient to secure an undying fame for the artist. The scroll has been much damaged and restored, but it is endorsed with the honorific seals of many emperors and distinguished collectors and is now to be seen in the British Museum.

A few years later lived the famous painter Lu T'an-wei. Apart from his pictorial works he is especially notable for the extraordinary virtuosity of his brush-work, and he is said to have been able to execute a complete drawing with one continuous and rapidly moving stroke of the brush. This mastery over the unbroken line was the twin ideal of both painting and writing, and the parallel development of the two arts was never more close than at this period.

There were many artists hardly less famous in the fifth and sixth centuries, one of whom, Chang Seng-yu, should be mentioned. He was a prolific worker and made many pictures for Buddhist temples besides the portraits for which he was famous. For him, as for other artists of his day, the dragon and the tiger were creatures which had a special appeal. During two thousand years the popularity of these *motifs* had been increasing, partly due to the symbolic significance which they shared with the tortoise and

the red bird as emblems of the four quarters of the world. But now the tiger and the dragon outstripped their heraldic compeers in public favour, for they began to be imbued with new attributes: the dragon with spiritual forces and the tiger with earthly power. Both became as indispensable in the repertoire of Chinese painters as the emblems in Italian art of the three archangels, the dragon of St. Michael, the lily of St. Gabriel, and the fish of St. Raphael. So, too, the recurrence in Chinese pictures of Kuan-yin and the Buddha with the sixteen Lohan (apostles) compares with the inevitable subjects of the Virgin and Christ and the Twelve Apostles in Europe. Copies of Chang's *tour de force* called 'Brushing the Elephant' have been handed down from early times, though the original itself is now lost. His pictures are said to have been informed with a mystic power, and the following legend illustrates their hypnotic influence on posterity. One day Chang completed a mural painting of four white dragons, but the onlookers noticed that he had left out their eyes. Chang explained the danger of giving sight to such spirited creatures, but when he was laughed at he finished two of them. 'At once the air became filled with thunder and lightning, the wall broke down, and the dragons ascended on clouds to heaven. But the two other dragons who had no eyes remained at their places.'

It is easy to understand the belief in such fables when one sees the soaring monsters which were painted

for a tomb in Corea at the end of the sixth century. Though by an unknown craftsman, the lithe, winged dragon in Plate VIII illustrates the mesmeric effect with which works by his greater contemporaries fascinated the onlooker. Its dynamic poise and phantom weirdness still strike the imagination and add to our wonder at the virtuosity which distinguishes the decorative art of this age. And the same master-ship of medium was common to the artist whether he worked in paint or bronze, jade or stone. Sculpture especially shows the same rhythmic quality and vital flowing line. It is an archaic style, yet one that is entirely charming. The itinerant craftsmen-monks had apparently come at first from the Indo-Scyths, and this may well account for the prominent noses of the early statues, for this feature resembles the large nose which appears on Indo-Scythian coins. The Chinese craftsman for a time copied this convention and did not carve figures with the typical native low-bridged nose till considerably later. The early Wei figures also display several other marked characteristics. The faces are broad and they wear a curious smile. The legs of seated statues are often shown crossed at the shins, while the gown is folded over the left shoulder and descends to the base of the throne in graceful folds, the ends often overhanging the upper edge of the base in flat pleats as if of linen. As in Han times, both anatomy and drapery are still subordinate to the conception as an entity; but not to the same



‘Winged Dragon.’ (Artist unknown.) Wall-painting of the 6th century
from a tomb in Corea.

degree. The folds of drapery are now conventionalized as rhythmic flowing lines incised upon the surface, and in standing figures they end at the skirts in gay swallow-tail curves. But though neither the body nor its covering are rendered with the purpose of reproducing the actual object, the result carries conviction combined with a pleasing air of serenity and grace.

The building of the first Buddhist temple, and later of the first Chinese pagoda were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The latter is *Pagodas* said to have been erected at Nanking by the reigning emperor, encouraged by a foreign monk, but further historical details are lacking. It is probable that its design, like that of later Chinese pagodas, was largely a development of a foreign type of tower, knowledge of which was introduced with Buddhism. As the pagoda has always been a Chinese feature more characteristic yet less understood than any other, it may be of interest here to give some account of it. The prototype was an Indian monument called a stūpa, the common form of Buddhist reliquary, of which the best-known examples are the ruined stūpa at Sāñchī and the famous stūpa of King Kaniska at Peshawar. Kaniska was the most celebrated of the kings of the Indo-Scyths, and we have seen that the Chinese occasionally had communication with this race and that from them an envoy had brought news of Buddhism in 2 B.C.

The earliest recorded Buddhist temple was previously

referred to as built in the second century A.D. It would seem to have been of the semi-stūpa type, because the builder 'piled up metal discs at the top, and multiplied the storeys below. In addition, the buildings constructed all around could hold 3,000 persons. . .'.¹ This description would serve equally well for the now rare stūpa type of monastery which can still be seen in the mountain range that separates China from Tibet. The lower portion of the building is a widespread base consisting of seven storeys diminishing upwards like a stepped pyramid, while above this rises a central tower shaped like an inverted bell and handle. The whole design is a close parallel to the fully developed Indian model. The latter had a stepped platform surmounted by a hemispherical or semi-ovoid dome from which rose a square plinth carrying a round central shaft decorated with 'piled up metal discs', set horizontally one above another. The discs resembled a series of superposed umbrella-like roofs pierced by the 'stick' or central shaft.² Two examples of this late type have been found in India, one a stone model of a temple from Bodh-Gayā, the other a stone memorial stūpa in the Sārnāth Museum. But of full-size examples of a temple in the stūpa design there still stands only one, the small stone

¹ I am indebted to 'Writings on Chinese Architecture', W. Perceval Yetts, *Burlington Magazine*, March 1927, for this account, cited by Pelliot, and for some of the facts (but not the theories) about early buildings given in this chapter.

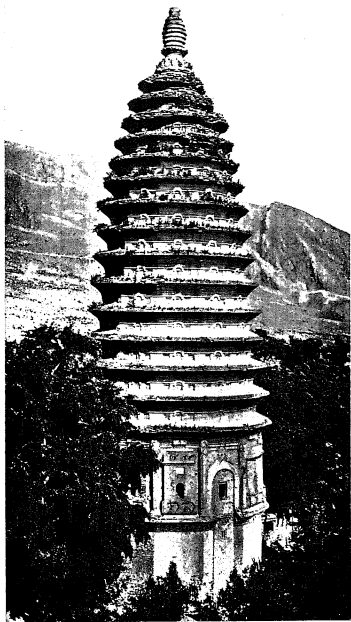
² 'Chinese Pagodas', Arnold Silcock, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 14 April 1928, p. 362.

building at Nalanda in Bengal. There are larger kinds left amongst the later Nepalese wooden temples, and of these the famous one near Katmandu might well serve as the standard transitional type, for in design it lies half-way between the stūpa monument of India and the earliest existing pagoda of China.

As the stūpa spread north and eastward through Burma, Nepal, and the Himalayas, its design gradually altered, and in this way the Himalayan architecture of wood probably influenced the first pagodas in China which, record states, were built of timber. Surviving examples show that each change tended to increase the importance of the tapering tower with its series of rings or discs. In addition it is known that in the mid-fifth century a Chinese pilgrim to India recorded in his journal the measurements of Kaniska's great stūpa at Peshawar. Again, the Empress Hu of the Northern Wei dynasty sent a mission to India in A.D. 518 which brought back bronze models of the five finest stūpas including the Kaniska building. The empress also built a nine-storied timber pagoda a thousand feet in height and, so the story goes, at the top it carried a hundred-foot shaft upon which thirty gilt bowl-shaped discs rose one above another. But this great monument came to a tragic end. Legend says it took fire and burned to the ground only thirty years later amidst scenes of hysterical grief, and that three of the monks even threw themselves into the flames.

The oldest pagoda still in existence is a brick structure, built in A. D. 523 during the Northern Wei period at Sung Shan in Honan (one of the five sacred mountains of China). It is an octagonal building of striking design set in beautiful surroundings. The date assigned to it is confirmed by the evidence of its style and by ancient records. This tower is massive yet graceful, a model of the method whereby the best is absorbed from foreign sources and united with something distinguished and distinctively Chinese. It has a convex outline and, instead of roofs, a series of horizontal string courses resembling rings rising upon its shaft. Though the tower is built of brick its design is still very like that of a wood Nepalese stūpa temple, and it may well represent the transitional stage from which evolved the many-roofed pagoda of later times.

It seems probable, then, that the stūpa's very typical tapering shaft, carrying superimposed discs or rings, ultimately evolved into a tapering tower divided into diminishing storeys by a series of umbrella-like roofs. Thus the roofs of the fully developed Chinese pagoda reflect the form of their earliest stage of evolution in India, for they began as actual umbrellas fixed upon the stūpas. Their history is one of those fascinating bypaths of art for the tracing of which credit must be given to the archaeologist. Umbrellas occur as emblems of sovereignty in the wall paintings of ancient Egypt. Centuries later they appear on the sculptural reliefs of Assyria, and later still in the sculptures of



Early Octagonal Pagoda at Sung Shan, in Honan.

A.D. 523.

Persepolis. Their symbolic use spread to the East and they became round, flat-topped affairs, decorated with bells, in the India of Asoka, the king who raised Buddhism from the obscurity of a small sect to the status of a recognized religion. In those days the stūpa consisted of the usual terrace, steps, and dome, with a large stone coffer for the relics raised upon the dome's crown. The coffer was closed by a heavy stone lid as a protection from robbers, and as the robbers became more enterprising so the custom grew of adding more and heavier slabs. When the religion obtained the support of Asoka he permitted his royal emblem, an umbrella (probably made in copper), to be placed on the topmost slab. But even this did not scare marauders for long, so, as with the previous custom of adding lids, more and more umbrellas were placed on the reliquary by the trusting mourners, until eventually the stūpas looked like large boulders with a swarm of mushrooms sprouting from their crowns. At last a master mason more brilliant than his fellows hit upon the scheme of providing one central staff which could carry an indefinite number of umbrellas. Thence it was a short step to the wood or metal mast with a series of metal discs and from this to the stone shaft carved with superimposed rings and small triangular pendants representing the bells. The increase in size and the heavier proportions required by a stone or brick structure would help to influence the sturdy pagoda-like form of early towers of this type in China,

and of such is the magnificent example at Sung Shan. From then onwards the shaft retained its increased importance as a tower, while the domed lower portion, its original purpose long forgotten, fell into disuse and soon disappeared. As the true pagoda form evolved it became the custom to shield the projecting lower stories from the weather by making the rings in the form of umbrella-like pent roofs. Often there were thirteen, representing the Buddhist heavens, with a topmost umbrella-roof for the highest heaven—a form closely resembling the Indian prototype.¹

The evolution of the design does not, however, help to explain the purpose for which pagodas were built. They appear to have lost all connexion with the stūpa as a Buddhist reliquary, for, as we have seen, the dome and coffer features have atrophied and disappeared in the pagoda, leaving only the shaft-like tower with its umbrella roofs. Many theories have been advanced to explain the significance and lasting popularity of this, an architectural form which seems of no practical value and is the expression of no material need. Chief among the theorists is the German scholar Boerschmann, who believes that the Buddhist reliquary, when it was imported from India, appealed forcibly to the Chinese people, with whom towers had always been popular. He was perhaps thinking of the *t'ai*, lofty

¹ I have drawn freely from the full and scholarly account of the evolution of the umbrella *motif*, given in 'The Development of the Stūpa', A. H. Longhurst, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, vol. xxxvi, 1928.

look-out towers reputed to have been first built by the emperors of the Shang-Yin period in their hunting parks, and of the smaller decorative towers of wood which were built in later times.

He suggests in the first place that the widespread custom of tower building shows that the Chinese also had tendencies towards individual expression, as opposed to ancestor worship, and that the high towers, which free themselves from earth and transcend earth, better than any other form of architecture express the essential character of Buddhism as a religion of redemption, addressing itself to the individual man and freeing him from his bondage to nature. He contrasts with these the 'horizontal' buildings of ancient China, typifying its feeling for the intimate connexion of the family with the soil and the home, and man's unity with, and unqualified dependence upon nature, which was expressed in their ancestor and nature worship. It was the development of a pavilion form which Boerschmann believes may have led the Chinese to express in their pagodas an evolution upwards, particularly in the multiplication of storeys, for the purpose of bringing down the deities.

He also suggests the philosophical explanation that, as there is need for high buildings which distinguish themselves from the mass, giving a focus point for the eye in a vista, so in spiritual life there was a need for a focus point and meeting place. And again he gives a possible political explanation, that the sovereign

built a tower to be constantly before the eyes of the people as a symbol of his might.¹

None of these theories seem entirely satisfying although all are interesting. The fact remains, therefore, that these beautiful features of the Chinese landscape serve no known purpose. By the Confucianists they are supposed to control *fêng shui*, the 'influences of wind and water', and so to bring good luck to the place that lies within their shadow, but it is doubtful whether the Buddhists connect them with any religious purpose. Yet although they are no longer regarded as depositories for the relics of Buddha's body, none the less a devout Buddhist is still sometimes alleged to acquire merit by building one. When he does so, the Chinese genius always leads him to place it just where its slender outline will most aptly provide a foil for the surrounding landscape and show to posterity that he can build beautifully in the monumental manner when the spirit moves him. The Gothic spire has been the subject of philosophic speculation of the kind put forward to account for the equally lovely and equally useless pagoda. Perhaps after all there is something in the notion that in periods of religious fervour the soul of man expresses aspiration by building towers pointing to the skies, whether he is a follower of Christ or Buddha. Certainly the priesthood of both religions taught the existence of paradise, a conception utterly without appeal to the

¹ *Chinesische Architektur*, Ernst Boerschmann, Wasmuth, Berlin, 1925

materialistic China of Confucius, or the even more materialistic Rome of the pre-Christian era, and both these periods produced 'horizontal' buildings, not slender lofty towers.

Another well-known feature of the Chinese landscape is the stone memorial gateway of many lintels but no gates. The pairs of posts and elaborately carved beams of these *p'ai-lou* clearly show their Indian origin for, unlike pagodas, their design has been little changed throughout the centuries. If they are compared with the many-lintelled gateways in the palisade of the Indian stūpa at Sānchī the resemblance will strike the eye immediately. One of the similarities (to be seen more clearly in the Indian archetype) is the system of jointing, which shows that they were evolved from an earlier form constructed of wood. The wood form persisted in the *torii*—the Japanese version of the *p'ai-lou*. In China, in later times, they were often erected as memorials by pious widows and they usually bear inscriptions of dedication. They may be found spanning the roads and adding charm to the landscape in every part of the country.

The curved roof is another charming feature often thought of as typically Chinese. But it is no more indigenous than the pagoda or the *p'ai-lou*.

In Europe a simple oblong building may be roofed by two straight slopes like an inverted 'V', the sides resting upon the longer walls at the eaves and running up to meet at the centre along the line of the ridge.

At each of the two shorter ends the wall may be carried up into the inverted V to support the roof beams and it is then called a gable end. Alternatively the tops of all four walls may be kept at the same level at the eaves, and the ends of the building are then also covered with roof-slopes, in the same way and with the same angle as the roof-slopes covering the sides. The joint where the side and end roof-slopes meet—on plan—forms a right angle. These junctions are called hips. It is this form, the hipped roof, which is almost universal in Chinese buildings, although the ends of a roof are often found with the upper half gabled and the lower half hipped. In ancient times the usual kind was the hipped roof with four straight roof-slopes.

It will be remembered that this type was shown in the bas-reliefs of the Han dynasty from the Wu Liang tombs in Shantung, and there is no evidence of the building of *curved* roofs before the Northern Wei dynasty. During the latter period, however, curvilinear roofs were evidently well known, for a roof with the boldest possible sweep at its horned hips is shown on a stone relief—a stele—of this time. No actual remains of such buildings now exist because the fatal custom of constructing them in wood persisted, but there is little doubt that the roof above mentioned represented that of a Chinese building influenced by the curvilinear roofs of Indian Buddhist architecture.

The origin of the curved roof has perhaps aroused

more controversy and given rise to more far-fetched theories than any other single feature of Chinese art. One of the most popular theories alleges that its form has persisted from the sagging curve of skin tents, the dwellings of the Chinese in a nomad stage of their history. But, apart from other objections, it is sufficient to say that there is no evidence that such a nomad stage ever existed. Another theory is that the concave roof lines were built in imitation of the curving branches of pine trees and that the little figures of fabulous animals which ornament the hip-tiles represent squirrels running along or sitting on the branches! The pragmatical school states that roofs were gradually made at a steeper pitch so that heavy rain should drain off rapidly: at the same time they were made to project far out at the eaves in order to throw the rain drips clear of the walls. Later, upcurved eaves had to be adopted to ensure that light and air should flow freely under them into the building. This theory is not borne out by other equally practical considerations: for Chinese roofs often curve throughout their slope, not at the eaves alone, while doors and windows rarely open high up under them. The explanation is probably still simpler. Earthenware roof-tiles, though of various designs, have always had in common the one attribute of great weight. On the other hand, the rafters upon which they were laid were thin strips of wood that tended to sag under their load. This was the ancient practice both in India and China, so far

as can be seen in old carvings and rock-cut reproductions of tiled roofs, and it is still the practice at the present day. A slight bending of the rafters was therefore recognized as natural in building small roofs, and in the larger it might well have been purposely exaggerated in order to obtain the pleasing effect of a more definite curve. But this exaggeration was first practised in India over five hundred years before the Northern Wei period in China, as we see from the wall paintings in the caves of Ajantā and in the carved reliefs at Sānchī. It seems likely, therefore, that this curvilinear form, first developing in India, became known to the Chinese at the same time and in the same way as did so many other features of Indian art after the introduction of Buddhism.

There is still one typically Chinese refinement which has not been accounted for—the ‘horn’ at the angle of curved roofs. But this is largely an added refinement to the naturally upcurving hip. Where, at the corner of a building, two curving roof-slopes meet at right angles, some way must be found to cover the junction and provide at the same time a watertight joint and an effective sky-line. The extension of this corner roof feature into a ‘horn’, constructed either in glazed pottery hip-tiles or in cement with moulded decoration, fulfilled both purposes perfectly.

The period of the Three Kingdoms and the following epoch of the Division of North and South, brought about by the invasion of China by the T'o-pa Tartars,

saw the rapid growth of Buddhism. In art the evidence of this growth is seen particularly in the records of religious paintings and sculpture, the earliest temples with curved roofs and the first cave-shrines and pagodas. There exist actual ruins of the latter and of sculpture, both in a fair state of preservation, and these help us to visualize the enormous power of the Buddhist religion at the close of the Northern Wei (Tartar) dynasty in the mid-sixth century A.D.



FIG. 11. PORTRAITS ENGRAVED ON STONE.

Copy of a painting probably dating from the Eastern Han dynasty. (*See page 93.*) From an inked squeeze.

VII

BUDDHISM HEALS THE DIVISION OF NORTH AND SOUTH, A.D. 536-618

CIVILIZATION¹

By YUAN CHIEH

To the south-east—three thousand leagues—
The Yuan and Hsiang form into a mighty lake
Above the lake are deep mountain valleys,
And men dwelling whose hearts are without guile
Gay like children, they swarm to the tops of the trees,
And run to the water to catch bream and trout
Their pleasures are the same as those of beasts and birds,
They put no restraint either on body or mind
Far I have wandered throughout the Nine Lands;
Wherever I went such manners had disappeared
I find myself standing and wondering, perplexed,
Whether Saints and Sages have really done us good

PAINTERS were now at work embellishing the walls and especially the roofs of the Buddhist caves. Most of the pictures have been destroyed or defaced in one or other of the five great *Buddhist* persecutions of Buddhism, but a few remain, *Triumphant* and of these some date from about the mid-fifth century, a hundred years after the first shrine was begun. The earliest rock-cut temples are the caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-Huang *Cave Shrines* (which, it will be remembered, is situated on the extreme north-west), Yun-Kang on the

¹ 170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, p. 97.

northern border, and Lung-mên near Lo-yang, Honan. At the first two, foreign influences were already strong in the fifth and early in the sixth centuries. Later, both in sculpture and painting, details such as the decorative bands of foliage and the jewel shapes in the moulding enrichments display an Iranian origin, and some of the figures have a decidedly central Asian aspect. Both at Yun-Kang and at Lung-mên the earliest inscriptions bear the date A.D. 483, and these grottoes were probably begun about twenty-five years before that time. Yun-Kang is celebrated for its colossal rock-cut Buddhas (see frontispiece) one of which is over fifty feet high. But the work at Yun-Kang ceased when the capital was removed to Lo-yang, and from that time on into the eighth century the nearby Lung-mên shrines flourished. The idea of the rock-cut temple itself had its source in India, where Buddhist cave-shrines had been made since the first century B.C. Of these the most beautiful of all are the caves at Ajantā enriched by the wonderful frescoes painted between the first and the seventh centuries A.D. Indian influence is apparent in China not only in the incidental passing on of the idea of cave-shrines, but in the many art forms and types of heavenly beings which were depicted on the small copies of frescoes and on the banners, as well as in statues, reliquaries, and religious trappings brought to China from time to time by Buddhist missionaries. Some of these forms have

already been mentioned, but in the cave-paintings perhaps the most typical and attractive are the lotus (used as a central boss in a ceiling and as a spray with stem, leaf, and flower in painted ceiling panels), and the flying *devatā*, heavenly attendants which soar gracefully with gauzy draperies streaming out across the ceiling's painted sky. Many of these painted ceilings are divided into rectangular panels in the semblance of the real coffers and beams of Indian architecture. In some the panels are painted with floral designs, in others with squares diminishing in size to the centre and each one placed diagonally to the axis of its neighbour. This geometric design is still popular for panelled and coloured wood ceilings in China, but its origin is in the primitive square wood frames which were placed diagonally one above another diminishing to form a pyramidal roof over a square room. This type of roof was not invented in China but was common in south-eastern Asia, and there is at least one rock-cut example in existence.

Another cave-shrine feature is the arch, both semi-circular and three-sided, which was used over niches carved from the rock. These structural forms are also of Indian origin, and the less common angular arch persisted in later Chinese architecture. The semi-circular or (to be exact) horseshoe arch is usually enclosed within an arched moulding which rises to a point above the centre. Its 'ace of spades' outline represents the ogee moulding used in India, a

conventional rendering of the pippala leaf *motif* and one common to architecture and sculpture. It is frequently found as a leaf-shaped aureole before which the Buddha sits, sculptured in the rock-shrine or in the small votive bronze of the period. Its significance is due to the legend that the Buddha attained enlightenment while seated in contemplation under a pippala tree. Both types of arch were developed in Gandhara, the home of the most famous school of Indian Buddhist sculpture. Both, at first surmounting the carved niches protecting statues, were used architecturally later in India and in China at cave-shrine entrances or over arches and doorways of stone, though they did not affect the post and beam architecture of wood.

Gandhara was the chief centre in northern India of a school of sculpture influenced by Greek ideas. It owed its traditional outlook to its long survival as a Grecian settlement after the conquests of Alexander the Great. Its site was the Peshawar valley, which in A.D. 78 fell into the hands of Kaniska, king of the Indo-Scyths, the Indo-European race which was then overrunning the country. This is the race from which China received Buddhist influences, and in particular the knowledge of stūpa design which so strongly affected the early pagodas. The Indo-Scyths were nomads with almost no art of their own and, being fair-complexioned and partly European, no doubt the traditional Grecian type of figure sculpture in Gandhara powerfully appealed to

them. But an added incentive was the conversion of Kaniska to Buddhism. From then on the Gandhara school flourished and its Hellenic ideals strongly affected the art of the Far East including eventually that of China. Among the most noticeable characteristics which ultimately reached China are the Greek method of rendering the folds of drapery and the Apollo-like cast of face. This is the most obvious departure from the indigenous Indian model for, like all the art of the Greeks it displays their preoccupation with man's beauty and intelligence whereas Indian art was solely devoted to the worship of their gods.

Before leaving the important subject of rock-cut temples one other feature must be noted. This is the evidence of a further development in the treatment of landscape. Some of the caves contain wall-paintings in which the background represents a more elaborate treatment of natural scenery than is seen in the early work of Ku K'ai-chih already referred to. Though not as yet belonging to a definite school of landscape painting, they mark a further step towards that goal and are therefore an important landmark half-way along the slowly travelled road. Together with the other cave-paintings, they are specially significant because almost every other picture of the period, whether on silk or paper, has disappeared. Except in the one or two cases mentioned, the works of the great masters can only be studied in copies of later date and compared with criticisms of them published in Chinese

books, usually also of later date. But in the cave paintings can be seen authentic works of the fifth, sixth, and later centuries, and their authenticity in some degree balances the misfortune that they were not painted by the great masters but by competent craftsmen working in the same tradition.

The famous Six Canons of Painting were formulated by the portrait painter Hsieh Ho, who died at the beginning of the sixth century. Like Confucius, he did not originate so much as clarify and express contemporary ideas and principles which had been slowly moulded by experience and tradition. The Six Canons have ever since been accepted as the only essential criteria for the critical analysis of pictorial art, and Hsieh Ho himself takes twenty-nine painters and assesses the merit of their work by the application of his principles. It must be remembered, however, that they were laid down at a time when a separate school of landscape had not yet emerged, although they were applied to landscape pictures in course of time. The Six Canons are as follows

*The Six
Canons of
Painting*

1. Rhythmic Vitality.
2. Use of the Brush to form Anatomical Structure.
3. Conformation with the Objects depicted to represent them truthfully.
4. Conformation with the Objects depicted to show them in their Appropriate Colours.
5. Design and Composition.

6. Transmission of Classical Models by Study and Imitation.

Of these No. 1 no doubt meant to suggest the spiritual, living power which informs some paintings and which moves us to say they are inspired. The Chinese considered it by far the most important, and it has since become so in Western eyes. No. 2 is both second in the list and in importance, because with painting which owes everything to the training in brush-work given by Chinese writing, structural use of the brush holds a place rarely awarded to it in the West. Nos. 3 and 4 owe their important position to the ideals of the time, when study of and truth to nature had superseded the archaic presentation of legendary subjects for which the observation of natural phenomena and daily life were not essential. No. 5 is a *sine quâ non* in which Chinese art has always excelled since the close of the Han dynasty. No. 6 reveals once more the fatal predilection for looking back rather than forward which has retarded China's development in art, and not in art alone. Although a study of traditional models seems to us desirable for the training of a student, it would hardly be included if we evolved six canons of painting. So it is perhaps the sixth canon with which our modern ideas have least in common, yet it is highly important not only as an influence on development but because to it we owe the many magnificent copies of lost masterpieces. Although the copying of classic models was definitely

approved, nevertheless it must not be forgotten that the idea of art as a mere copying of *nature* had no place. Even more true of Chinese than of Western art are the words of Michelangelo: 'Painting is a music and a melody which intellect alone can appreciate, and that with difficulty.'

The conception of rhythmic vitality in pictorial art probably influenced the sculptural and
Sculpture pottery figures of the time, for the latter were made by craftsmen who would look up to the painter-poets as 'gentlemen', exponents of the fine arts—calligraphy and painting. In the modelling of the human figure this rhythmic quality is helped by the swaying pose, the more easily flowing robes loosely girded by criss-cross scarves or ribbons, the ends of which seem to flutter in the breeze. The body still gives an impression of flatness, which is increased by the depressed chest, a feature supposed to be symbolical of the Buddhist's suspended breathing when withdrawn from the world in meditation. The body, indeed, bears no more relation to anatomical fact than a tailor's dummy, yet with the form given to it by the rhythmic lines of its draperies the whole conception becomes a vital and convincing entity. The lengthening of the ears marks another change in Chinese religious sculpture and recalls the well-known saying: 'With ears touching shoulders, a most illustrious man.' Possibly the Indian custom of drawing down the ear-lobes by inserting heavy jewels in

them brought about the change, for since representations of deities imported from India would also be shown with ears elongated in this way, the Chinese craftsman would imagine that it was a special symbol of sanctity.

An explanation of the many scenes depicted in Buddhist painting and sculpture, and the various significant poses and gestures of the figures presented would involve an historical description of the religion's evolution which would be too long and complex to give even in outline. A few of the typical subjects and their special characteristics, however, as they are met with frequently in later Chinese art, are given in the Appendix.

The supremacy of the Tartar Wei dynasties lasted from A.D. 386 to 557, and we have seen that the chief was the Northern Wei, followed in 534 by the short-lived Eastern and Western Wei dynasties. The encouragement given by the Tartar Wei rulers to Buddhism is the most outstanding feature of the epoch. The religion spread rapidly and soon developed special characteristics which expressed the greater depth and richness of the Chinese psychology. These characteristics are either absent from the later Buddhism of Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Tibet, or else they atrophied. The chief among them was the spirit of tenderness and compassion. In the first place Hinduism had naturally influenced the Buddha's teaching. He accepted the old pantheism and the

doctrine of the transmigration of souls, but adapted these conceptions to suit his own views. The gods became of less importance when emphasis was laid on the inexorable fate of man to reap what he had sown, and transmigration of souls became more important when this conception meant a succession of rebirths incidental to man's journey on the long road to Nirvana. The Buddha also taught that even the old gods were subject to rebirth and that god-fearing asceticism was superseded by self-sacrifice, service, and reading the scriptures as the way of salvation. To the Chinese this religion meant escape from the despondency bred by that too ready submission to fate which mars their native nobility of character. Once they had tasted the freedom offered by the new faith they desired more and more. So it was natural that they should adopt the later form—called Mahayana—which held out to each man the prospect of attaining for himself Buddhahood and endless happiness in paradise, rather than the earlier form—Hinayana—which taught the original austerities of the Buddha, a succession of good lives, and ultimate oblivion in Nirvana.

The religion of Taoism no doubt aided the acceptance of this concept of the Paradise (and Hell) of Mahayana Buddhism, for, as we have seen, Taoism had long taught the belief in immortality and the Isles of the Blest. So much was this the case that the history of the fruitless search for the Elixir of

Immortality by the Taoists corresponds both in its nature and its widespread sway to the labours of the alchemists in medieval Europe. But the Buddhist believer had the inestimable advantage of heavenly aid, for it was the Mahayana school which first taught that man was helped to find the true path by compassionate beings called Bodhisattvas. And further, that by duly following this path he himself might eventually become a Bodhisattva—a guardian who has achieved, but voluntarily delayed, deification in order to help humanity towards the ultimate paradise and Buddhahood. But nothing shows the power of Buddhism more than this period's revised version of the ancient story of Lao-tzū's last journey into the West. The Taoist belief that the old philosopher at the end of his long life mounted an ox, rode away, and vanished into the West, has been mentioned in Chapter III, but in the altered story an incongruous climax appears, for after his disappearance he was now said to have become a Buddha.

The spread of Buddhism was not entirely free from set-backs. Twice in this epoch there were persecutions; the first, in A D. 444, lasting for eight years, and the second in A D. 573, when the emperor issued an edict abolishing the religion. But it survived these attacks, defeating the growing jealousy of the Taoists and the Confucianists which could not shake its hold upon the imagination of the people. Thus, by the beginning of the fifth century, the religion had spread

to the kingdoms which occupied the region now called Korea, and thence to Japan. It is to this circumstance that we owe precious examples of Chinese Buddhist painting and sculpture still preserved in collections there.

In the last chapter it was shown that the Northern Wei of T'o-pa Tartar ancestry adopted both *Buddhist Sculpture* that form of the religion and of art prevalent in North China, the land they had conquered, and that thus their Buddhist sculptures at first displayed the native and Indo-Scythian features already present in the existing Chinese School. These included a certain flatness in rendering the human figure, a curious smile, a wedge-shaped nose, and a dignified pose and flowing lines of drapery, legacies of the Gandharan School. By the end of the Wei period (in the mid-sixth century) the type had gradually changed until the flatness of body had begun to give way to a cylindrical form. The skirts, especially in seated Buddha figures, had grown longer and more delicately pleated until sometimes they were shown like a carved cascade over the whole front of the throne, occupying as much space as the figure itself, while in standing figures the draperies had lost their curving swallow-tails but developed streamer-like ribands. The noble example of the later period shown in Plate X is a standing Bodhisattva in stone, three feet in height, a gem of the Eumorfopoulos collection. In this lovely figure the two scarf-like ribands fall from the shoulders,

PLATE X



Standing Figure of a Bodhisattva. In stone. 3 feet high. Late 6th or early 7th century. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

and passing criss-cross through a ring below the waist descend in loops over the knees and rise again to hang like long streamers from the wrists to the ground. The lightly etched draperies have a grace which with the dignity of pose and the austere serenity of expression captivates the imagination and disarms criticism. Yet a cold-blooded inspection reveals the shortness of the legs and the undue smallness of hands and feet—instances of the lack of attention to anatomical fact still to be found at the close of the Tartar Wei period.

There is a parallelism in the Buddhist sculpture of the sixth century in China with the Romanesque sculpture of France. In Europe the victories of the Visigoths were so cataclysmic that the fall of Rome involved the eclipse of art. It was not till more than six hundred years later, in the eleventh century, that a school of religious sculpture reappeared in France—a school analogous to the religious sculpture of the Tartar Wei period in China. This Romanesque school, in its archaic phase, represented Christ supported by the Evangelists carved on the tympana (or stone-filled arches) over the church doors, and the Christ is often shown seated with crossed legs. It will be remembered that the Buddha (supported by Bodhisattvas) is also frequently shown in this pose. Another parallelism is found a little later in the more cylindrical rendering of the body, with its clinging clothing, which increases remarkably the resemblance between these two outstanding schools of East and West. The third

similarity is found in the horizontal band of tiny subordinate figures which often decorates the base below the groups of large-scale figures in the relief carving of both countries. When, in the twelfth-century Toulouse school of Romanesque sculpture, Christ and the Evangelists are represented, the row of miniature figures along the base represent Elders. When, in sixth- and seventh-century Chinese Buddhist sculpture, Buddha with Disciples and Bodhisattvas are depicted, the small figures represent Heavenly Musicians and Dancers. We are all familiar with the custom (somewhat self-righteous to our eyes), of painting portraits of the donors in the immediate foreground of many masterpieces of Italian art. This custom grew up in China also, and similar kneeling figures of his pious paymasters were carved by the sculptor on the bases of monuments. It is not of course suggested that Chinese art influences of the sixth and early seventh century spread in an ever-widening circle till some far-flung ripple at the circumference reached Europe more than five hundred years later. Nevertheless some of the parallelisms described suggest that the mind of man reacts in an almost predictable way, even when two races, periods, and countries appear to be utterly unsympathetic, dissimilar, and separate.

In A.D. 520 the Indian patriarch Bodhidharma had arrived in China. One of the miracles he performed was the crossing of the Yangtse river standing on a

reed, and this episode is a favourite subject with later artists, who never forgot to give him a swarthy Indian aspect. But he is chiefly celebrated as the alleged founder of the Ch'an or Zen sect of Buddhism which is referred to in the next chapter.

The pottery of the Wei period shows a slight but definite advance in technique, but examples are rare. The difficulties of attribution are increased because a few years ago foreign collectors acquired the regrettable habit of labelling 'Wei' anything which was cruder than similar examples of the great T'ang period which followed. Even now very little is known about the pottery of the four centuries of unsettled political conditions which endured from the fall of the Han to the founding of the T'ang dynasty in A.D. 618. In spite of the fact that this period included the supremacy of the Tartar Wei dynasties, few examples of ceramic art have been recovered beyond crude grave objects. The latter include small figures of men and women, the former often on horseback, and some continuing the Han tradition of mimicking the appearance of bronze. Their draperies, it is true, are more flowing and the style is in the same tradition as the stone sculpture of the Wei, yet lamentably coarse by comparison. But included also are the outstanding examples of porcellanous stoneware, usually bottle-vases and bowls, which have been proved to be the immediate forerunners of porcelain. They were turned

*Pottery
of Wei
Period*

*Beginnings
of Porcelain*

on the potter's wheel and fashioned from a red clay which contains a fairly high proportion of kaolin, the actual white china-clay from which true porcelain was made during the later T'ang dynasty. They claim special attention because they indicate that the Chinese must have hit upon most of the secrets of true porcelain-making soon after the third century A.D. Western scholars have for many years known about the Chinese accounts which tell of Han porcelain, but no authentic examples of it have yet been discovered. This failure has really been due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of the original term for porcelain. In China the term *tz'ü* was first used to designate a finer, harder sort of glazed pottery, and as the potter's skill increased and his methods improved this term was still used until at last it included true porcelain. The word 'porcelain' is the English term for hard, resonant wares which are translucent, but the Chinese term *tz'ü* does not mean 'translucent ware'. it is a general term for hard, resonant wares, including both the translucent and the opaque. Correctly translated, therefore, *tz'ü* means porcellaneous wares, including porcelain. There is no doubt that the former were being made during the Han dynasty. The Wei period discoveries, however, show that the potters had rapidly acquired a higher degree of skill although they were still using crude methods—the only methods then available. This improvement soon earned official recognition, for history records that in the latter part

of the third century, pottery from a certain well-known kiln 'was intended for the use of the Court, and offered to the Emperor'.¹ This is the first known record of pottery being considered fine enough to be 'offered to the Emperor', for in Han and still earlier times no mention of it is made either in the tribute lists or in records of gifts to the sovereign. But from now on the kilns received imperial encouragement and these finer wares appear in official records. Their body was of a coarse but extremely hard porcellaneous material. If it had been ground finer, as it was when methods improved in later years, a true (translucent) porcelain might have resulted. But even at this time it was covered with a non-porous porcelain coat to prevent it from absorbing the outer covering, the latter being a new greenish-yellow glaze, also a true porcelain glaze, in this case transparent and of very fine quality. When the ware is struck it gives out a ringing sound which nevertheless falls short of the clear musical note of true porcelain. The walls of these vessels are still opaque, for a hint of the delicacy and translucency of body yet to come only appeared at the end of the sixth century.

The division between north and south had lasted for about two hundred years. During this lapse of time the power of Buddhism had increased enormously all over politically divided China and had profoundly

¹ *The Beginnings of Porcelain in China*, Berthold Laufer, Field Museum of Natural History Publication 192, Anthropological Series, vol. xv, no. 2, 1917, p. 101.

affected her art. In the north its influence is chiefly seen in the realm of sculpture and in the south in that of painting. Unconsciously the Tartar Wei kingdoms of the north were being drawn closer to the native kingdoms of the south by the strengthening bonds of their common religion. The whole of China became at last united as a Buddhist nation just as Europe was united in medieval times by the supremacy of the Catholic Church.

*Buddhism unites
North and
South China*

In A.D. 581 this union of religious aims was further encouraged by the unification of the empire with the founding of the brilliant though short-lived Sui dynasty. The accession enhanced the authority of the religion, and this seems more than anything else to have united the nation and prepared a fertile field for a more rapid growth of culture. Buddhism quickly achieved a greater pre-eminence than ever before, and its increased popularity, officially encouraged, in turn encouraged a tremendous activity among artists and craftsmen. Thousands of new temples were built, decorated with mural paintings, sculpture, banners, statues of silver and gold, and all the furniture and trappings in wood, bronze, and lacquer which were needed to complete the *ensemble*. But relics of this ascendancy are few, and thousands of beautiful temples perished with the priests during the wars and persecutions which followed. Nevertheless it was to the new spirit of the Sui dynasty that

the Golden Age of the T'ang period owed its inception.

Among the innovations resulting from the adoption of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, and *Transition
Period* dating from the Sui, are the great frescoes representing Amitabha Buddha, the Ruler of the Western Paradise, and from now on his cult was in the ascendant. How effectively the paradise subject was portrayed can be seen, though dimly, in the ruined wall-paintings of some of the later cave-shrines. But those in the new timber-built temples have all disappeared as the buildings decayed or were ruined by fire, war, or waves of iconoclastic destruction. The art also progressed in every other direction and the names of scores of painters of portraits, panoramic scrolls, and other subjects are known, although their works are lost. Both Iranian and Indian influences now flowed more freely into China, and the later Indian or Gupta school of sculpture brought in its train a gracious voluptuousness. A period of transition had already set in before the Sui accession, heralded by a greater suppleness in the figure sculpture, more elaborate costumes, and an almost abandoned freedom in the swinging necklaces and swaying folds of drapery. In the border ornament of carved foliage or the palmettes on rock-cut capitals in the cave-shrines the same character and sinuous grace appeared. Once more this quality displayed itself most clearly in representations of the dragon. Whether

coiling in pairs along the borders of a stone stele, guarding either side of the cave entrance to a rock-cut shrine, or entwined round the shoulders of a granary urn from the tombs, their serpentine bodies now writhed more nearly in the manner of the dragon in modern Chinese art. The images which they often protect now wore the chains of jewels and gem-studded head-dress which are associated with the late sixth century, and the folds of draperies stood out as rounded ridges and were more definitely Indian in type. The faces became fuller and rounder, the circular halo supplanted the leaf-shaped aureole, luxuriant foliage entwined sculptured bases and borders, and they in turn were enriched by jewel shapes carved on their mouldings, a heritage of Iranian influence on Indian forms. Indicative also of the questing spirit of the age is the story that the Emperor's new palace library was built with doors and windows which opened when the room was entered and closed when it was left. The once favourite Buddha image, Maitreya, was now being displaced by Sakyamuni, frequently made in bronze, and the charm of the bronzes of this time is nowhere better shown than in the celebrated altar-piece formerly in the Tuan Fang collection. All art expressed joy and freedom, and its manifestations merged imperceptibly with those of the next period—the glorious epoch of the T'ang.

VIII

THE T'ANG DYNASTY, A.D. 618-906 THE GOLDEN AGE

AN EARLY LEVÉE¹

Addressed to CH'EN, the Hermit

AT Ch'ang-an—a full foot of snow,
A levée at dawn—to bestow congratulations on the Emperor
Just as I was nearing the Gate of the Silver Terrace,
After I had left the suburb of Hsin-ch'ang
On the high causeway my horse's foot slipped,
In the middle of the journey my lantern suddenly went out.
Ten leagues riding, always facing to the North,
The cold wind almost blew off my ears
I waited for the bell outside the Five Gates,
I waited for the summons within the Triple Hall
My hair and beard were frozen and covered with icicles;
My coat and robe—chilly like water
Suddenly I thought of Hsien-yu Valley
And secretly envied Ch'ên Chu-shih,
In warm bed-socks dozing beneath the rugs
And not getting up till the sun has mounted the sky

THE T'ang dynasty is regarded by Chinese and foreigner alike as the Golden Age of art and culture, for while it is a period especially famous for its paintings—sculpture, pottery, bronze, and other crafts also show an extraordinary virility, grandeur of conception, and success in the incorporation of *motifs* from abroad.

¹ By the famous poet of the T'ang period, Po Chu-i. Quoted from *170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, p. 115. The old capital city at Ch'ang-an, in the north-west, was restored in the early years of the dynasty.

The rapid rise of the Sui dynasty was followed only a score of years later by as rapid a fall. The great founder of the new dynasty, T'ang T'ai Tsung, usurped the throne in A. D. 618. But this event did not interrupt the consolidation of the empire or the revival of culture which were already in full swing. On the contrary, the boundless energy and genius of the new ruler accelerated a movement which nothing could have stopped, for all the conditions were favourable and the time was ripe for an unparalleled revival. Among these favourable conditions was the absorption of traditional enemies like the Hsiung-nu. For centuries the Chinese emperors had attempted to placate these foes by means of gifts and especially by seeking marriages of convenience with them in which many royal princesses were sacrificed to political necessity. Poems lamenting their fate were written by more than one of these unfortunates, and in the Gobi Desert, legend says, there once stood the grave of a girl who had been given to the Khan of the Hsiung-nu by the Emperor in 33 B. C. in all that desolate waste it was the only mound where the grass would grow. But after the lapse of centuries these tribes had become united with the Chinese through the effects of intermarriage and changing conditions, with the result that the foreign elements in the empire were now a source of strength. The construction of the Imperial Canal, begun in the Sui dynasty and intended to connect the principal cities with the capital, was continued, while the restora-

tion of the capital at Ch'ang-an in the north-west furthered opportunities for military enterprise in Asia which had also been initiated under the Sui, but though there were successes in arms, other enemies were made and the Tibetans especially had grown strong enough occasionally to resist attack. Uighur Turks, Turcomans, Mongols, and Manchus were becoming forces to be reckoned with, but as yet there was no sign that the two latter were to change China's destiny.

The 'public libraries' of this time consisted of the book-collections housed in the temples. At Tun-Huang, that oasis and gateway to China through which countless foreigners had to pass at the end of their long journey across the central Asian deserts, have been found documents in dozens of languages, some of them now indecipherable. They included the Manichaean Confession among scores of other writings and paintings, all evidence of the welcome given at this period to the peoples and the religion and art of other lands.

The revival which put forth buds in the Sui dynasty burst into full flower during the T'ang. But, *Revival of Art* as with every manifestation of art in China, the growth was slower than a simile suggests. Until the beginning of the eighth century the unfolding process continued, following the lines of development initiated under the Sui. There are three great periods of Chinese art, especially great for their paintings, covering

approximately the duration of the T'ang, the Sung, and the Ming dynasties. Each of these periods lasted about three hundred years. Each had distinct characteristics of its own in its attitude to life and its time which influenced the technique and expression of its art. Under the T'ang the readiness to receive abundant influences from abroad was evident from the beginning. In the mid-seventh century, seven Buddha images (including a copy in sandalwood of the most famous statue of antiquity in India), together with copies of the Buddhist scriptures, were brought back by the celebrated envoys Hsuan Tsang and I Tsing. The latter also gives the first recorded description of true porcelain which, he says, like lacquer, was previously unknown in India although glazed earthenware was in use. Other travellers and artists came from India and central Asia to China, and Chinese journeyed to these distant lands bringing back ideas and *objets d'art* which affected (but never diverted) the course of tradition. The results can be seen more clearly in sculpture than in painting, for the finest of the few examples of mural decoration remaining from the seventh century are preserved in Japan. But with the eighth century there are some surviving though damaged frescoes to be seen in the cave-shrines, although experts differ as to the correct dating of others in non-Chinese collections and museums. The figures in these religious works are at first glance strong and dignified, and it is only later

that the onlooker notices and perhaps regrets the feminine wealth of jewels and diaphanous draperies with which they are clothed. This period saw the great popularity of the Bodhisattva figures—especially the growing cult of Kuan-yin—the more frequent occurrence of those strange many-armed and many-headed Hindu deities, and additions to the variety of poses and incarnations in which the Buddha was presented. From the mid-eighth century onwards there appears in painting a growing mastery over composition and the illusion of space and volume without any emphasis on actual perspective. The colours become richer and the delineation of character in face and gesture more charged with the conviction awarded by close observation. The faces and heads are skilfully modelled and an impression of figures standing out in full relief is given without resort to tricks of light and shade. It is a heroic art yet graced by the Chinese command of gliding sinuous line. The frescoes of this date from the Tun-Huang caves and the paintings on canvas and silk recovered from the same caves all show the rapid strides which the art was making. The latter can be seen in the collections brought back by Professor Pelliot and Sir Aurel Stein from Tun-Huang. Part of Sir Aurel's collection is now in the British Museum; it is fully described and illustrated in the books which have already been mentioned, but the great majority of the examples are of later date, i e. from the end of the ninth to the

tenth centuries. The subjects are chiefly the very numerous Buddha legends and the paradise pictures in which deities float in the depths of limitless space, adoring and making music before the Buddha enthroned. A whole host of attendant figures also appear: the Bodhisattvas, especially the above-mentioned Kuan-yin, originally rendered as a male form but later as a Goddess of Mercy, the sixteen Lohan or Arhats (apostles of Buddha), whose number was increased in course of time, particularly in Japan; and the fierce Lokapalas, guardians of the four quarters of the world. Many other divinities, demons, and emblems crowd the heavens or encrust the bright-hued borders like gems but they are too multitudinous to number. In them can be seen more clearly than anywhere else the extent and variety of Indian and Tibetan contributions to Chinese art. An endless multitude of forms was absorbed from a foreign mythology and transformed into Chinese types by these craftsmen.

Apart from frescoes, which, in the cave-shrines and temples, were usually painted by craftsmen
Painting as a Fine Art who were classed with the sculptor-craftsmen, there was a distinct group of cultivated men who practised painting as a fine art. They used for their 'studio pictures' the ink cake, which, when ground down with water, can yield a range of tones varying from a deep vivid black to the softest silver grey. The materials in use then were, and still are,

woven silk or paper, Chinese ink, and the *pi*—the writing-brush, or brush-pencil as it is often called. And since the technique of all art must be determined by the materials used, so the art of painting was limited in its development and proceeded along certain definite lines. As colour or ink was always of very watery consistency the paper for painting would be laid horizontally to prevent the colour running from the strokes, as it would have done if the paper had been placed at an angle or vertically on an easel. The silk or paper was soft and absorbent, and this necessitated quick decisive strokes of the brush to avoid blotting and spreading of the colour. The brush was held vertically above the paper as this method gave the maximum control over the instrument. All these factors added limitations to the technique so that the painter was obliged to depend for his effect on line drawing rapidly executed, flowing yet decisive. Furthermore, owing to the difficulty of drawing from a model in this fashion, and still more because a realistic representation was with these simple materials almost impossible, all objects were very soon conventionalized in drawing. The earliest and most urgent incentive towards such conventionalization was naturally the necessity of drawing the primitive pictographs and ideographs rapidly and simply but without sacrificing legibility. But another circumstance must be noted—that picture-drawing with the brush proceeded from the art of picture-writing

with the brush and that the two evolved into the arts of painting and calligraphy side by side, complementary to each other as media for the expression of thoughts and feelings. If all these factors are borne in mind the development and distinctive character of Chinese painting is seen to be natural—almost inevitable. The result was that by the T'ang period the highest expression of culture came from an intellectual aristocracy, often though not always of noble birth, to whom knowledge and appreciation of the classics was a birthright and who inevitably communicated ideas through poetry, at that time a normal medium of expression, transmitted by means either of calligraphy or painting. Drama and the novel were later developments which owed much to foreign inspiration, so that it is fair to say that during the T'ang dynasty the painter-poets were pre-eminent.

Many famous artists of the period took groups of scholars or monks as a popular subject for pictures. The rivalry between the two religions is amusingly illustrated by the story that a painting by a famous artist of a 'Drunken Buddhist Monk' aroused the vengeful Buddhists to commission another famous artist to paint a 'Drunken Taoist Monk'. These two have become very popular themes with later artists. So also have the celebrated poet Po Chu-i and his friends, known as 'The Nine Old Men at Hsiangshan' (who lived at this time close to the famous

*Religious
Paintings
and the
Great Land-
scape Painters*

Lung-mên cave-shrines), and other equally well-known groups. They seem to have made a universal appeal to the imagination and have inspired scores of compositions in words, paint, and porcelain. The distinguished painter Yen Li-pên is said to have excelled in the portrayal of these groups of monks or of scholars surrounded by their companions and servants, but many other artists hardly less famous and too numerous to mention followed his example. His ladies show the change from the light graceful ideal of Ku K'ai-chih to the round face and statuesque figure which is characteristic of Buddhist sculpture at the beginning of the T'ang period.

Li Ssü-hsun was descended from the founder of the T'ang dynasty and in addition to the commanding social position he enjoyed he earned the distinction of founding the Northern School of landscape painting. In his day the Ch'an (known in Japan as the Zen) Buddhist sect was divided into Northern and Southern schools, and the painters were styled Northern or Southern—after the two religious schools. A description of a branch of the Ch'an or Contemplative School states that its special object is:

'to teach that while self-improvement is hard, man has resources in himself to overcome all difficulties. This doctrine approaches to Confucianism, and the school is held in high esteem among the thoughtful classes in China, who despise the image worship—(. the Amidist or Lotus School)—of the ignorant multitude. Some monks say that "Amidist teaching is Ch'an doctrine

simplified for the multitude". Its special cult is that of Amitabha, the Buddha of the West. . This is the form of the religion which, rightly or wrongly, is supposed to have most in common with Roman Catholic Christianity, having its Purgatory, its Goddess of Mercy, its elaborate machinery for delivering the dead from pain and misery through the good offices of the priests, and gaining them an entrance into the Pure Land of the Western Heaven . Kuan Yin and Amita Buddha . . . having endeared themselves to the popular mind by their devotion to the human race The school has its own doctrine of Salvation by Faith, but no punishments are eternal The mere repetition of the name Amitabha has saving efficacy' (*Encyclopaedia Sinica*)

Such was the psychological background of the great painters and their religious pictures at this time when the Ch'an sect was evolving For in discussing the foundation of the great schools of landscape it must not be forgotten that religious paintings were also being made, and showed a parallel development. In landscape, the panoramic scroll which unfolded a league-long view of mountain range and river, became the customary form. Founded at first upon the early attempts to use natural scenery as a unifying setting for the illustrations of a fable or a Buddhist 'Divine Comedy', landscape rapidly outgrew this convention. The picture of the country-side was soon appreciated for its own sake, not as a drop curtain before which celestial and human actors in the story played their parts The figures of men or animals were omitted

entirely, or but slightly indicated, to give scale to the wide stretches of marsh and hill

By far the most celebrated of the landscapists was Wu Tao-tzŭ, who lived during and after the *Ming Huang* reign of the notorious Ming Huang in the *and Wu* first half of the eighth century. This em- *Tao-tzŭ,* *8th century* peror at first showed signs of becoming the ideal ruler of China. At the opening of his long reign prosperity and peace prevailed. He introduced far-reaching reforms as widely divergent in nature as they were civilizing in effect. The Han-lin Academy, that distinguished College of Literature, and the system of public examinations for government appointments have inspired scholars and artists with a patriotic ambition from the time of their foundation by Ming Huang, early in the eighth century, till the destruction of the Han-lin in the Boxer Rising at the beginning of the twentieth. The immediate effect of the system was good, as thereby a new aristocracy of culture arose which competed with the old nobility for place and power. But before long the examination in the 'sciences', including calligraphy, was overshadowed by a more and more stereotyped test of the student's knowledge of classical literature. Ming Huang initiated schemes for social betterment and state economy and decreed at the same time the abolition of capital punishment and the formation of an Academy of Music. A liberal patron of the arts, he appointed Wu Tao-tzŭ court painter. Hundreds of works were

executed during Wu's tenure of this office, the most notable being landscapes, and wall-paintings for Buddhist temples, especially his favourite subject, the figure of Kuan-yin. The thirteenth-century Italian story of the marvellous draughtsmanship of Giotto, who amazed his fellows by drawing a perfect circle in one swing of the arm, is matched by the following Chinese tale of five hundred years earlier. When Wu Tao-tzŭ was painting the halo of a deity, 'everybody in the city of Ch'ang-an, old and young, learned men and common people, came out to see how he did it with a single sweep of the brush as by a whirlwind. The people said: "He must be aided by a god."' In another place his style is described as exceedingly free and bold 'like the rolling waves of the sea'. His works are known through the rubbings from stone engravings which in accordance with the old custom were still in use before the later method of making line-block reproductions and bound books began to take their place. Copies both by later painters and from engravings are housed in the museums of London, Paris, and Boston, and alleged originals exist in Japan. They endorse concurrent Chinese opinion as to Wu's dynamic power of conception and magnificent sweeping line. It seems, therefore, almost a paradox that his favourite subject was the gentle Kuan-yin. But may it not have been that the bitter experiences and final disgrace of his friend and master, the emperor Ming Huang, touched him to this oft-repeated expres-

sion of compassion? Ming Huang, the lover of scholarship and justice, the musician whose compositions were famed as 'universal music', patron of art and an Augustan age of literature, changed and became false to his better nature and his people. His failure, as with so many artists, was fore-ordained by his inability to resist the insidious demands of sense. His interest in right government was eclipsed by his passion for beauty and luxury. Finally he fell under the spell of the lovely Yang Kuei-fei. In his wild infatuation for her everything else was forgotten until the awakening came with the open insurrection of his subjects. The soldiers strangled Yang Kuei-fei before his eyes and drove him into the Western Wilderness to perish of grief and despair. Fate's travesty of the triumph which his high destiny seemed to foreshadow is seen in the literature of the time. For the very poets whom he encouraged wrote their most moving epics upon his downfall. The tragedy has also formed the theme of innumerable poems and plays onwards from the time of this classic age, an age during which lived the great poets Tu Fu, Li Po, and Po Chu-i. Po Chu-i, author of the poem at the head of this chapter, immortalized Ming Huang's tragic desire for the lady Yang Kuei-fei in a poem beginning:

His imperial Majesty, a slave to beauty,
Longed for a 'subverter of Empires';
For years he had sought in vain
To secure such a treasure for his palace . . .

In translations of these poets' works we can see the same love of beauty and gentleness which irradiates some of the paintings and sculpture of the time. There is little doubt that Ming Huang's early reforms—his desire to spread happiness and justice throughout his kingdom—reflected the enlightened spirit of this age, and although it is true that religious persecutions occurred, they were organized from above, by statesmen with a political axe to grind or by rival factions of the priesthoods, not by the common people.

Wu Tao-tzū lived to serve later rulers as court painter. Perhaps his most famous picture was 'The Death of the Buddha', a large painting on one of the walls of a temple. Though not now existing, it is vaguely apprehended through later copies and a contemporary description. In magnificence it must have rivalled Tintoretto's vast mural painting, the 'Paradise', in the Ducal Palace at Venice. Wu Tao-tzū's composition shows the Buddha peacefully lying beneath a spreading tree while around him many thousands of figures, representing all creation, mourn his passing from them into Nirvana. The painter's last work was said to have been a huge landscape on one of the palace walls. When he finally drew aside the curtains and unveiled his masterpiece in the Emperor's presence, says the legend, he pointed to a cavern at the base of one of the mountains saying that a spirit lived there. Then he clapped his hands and the cavern gates opened.

'The interior is beautiful beyond conception, continued the artist, permit me to show the way, that your Majesty may behold the marvels it contains. He passed within, turning round to beckon his patron to follow, but in a moment the gateway closed, and before the amazed monarch could advance a step, the whole scene faded away leaving the wall white as before the contact of the painter's brush. And Wu Tao-tsz' was never seen again.'¹

Tolerance and broad-mindedness were then the rule. The Nestorian Christians founded a church and left a monument of stone which has long outlasted their Faith. Muhammadans, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Manichaeans also sent missions to China and made many converts who lived peaceably beside the Buddhists and Taoists. The missionaries, as usual, were in the vanguard of the swelling stream of traders and ambassadors from the western world. The welding together of the Chinese empire had been followed by striking military successes in Asia, opening the way for a closer contact with both Asiatic and European civilizations than had ever before been possible. Envoys were sent by the Caliph immortalized in the *Arabian Nights*—Haroun al-Raschid. Fresh Hellenic influence was carried in from the West, with the result that echoes of a Grecian purity and symmetry are evident in the noble plastic forms, the pottery and sculpture of the period. But the increasing gentleness of spirit cannot be ascribed to the Greek artist nor to

¹ *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, Herbert A. Giles, p. 53

the Christian missionary. These foreign influences though definite were slight, and of all the aesthetic and religious ideas that flowed into China during the T'ang period only the Hellenic, the Indian, the Iranian, and Muhammadan made any lasting impression. In Chapter III it was shown that the sayings of Lao-tzŭ, in the sixth century B. C., unfold the earliest Chinese conceptions of the doctrine of gentleness, and bear a remarkable resemblance in their principles of self-sacrifice, humbleness, and goodwill to the Beatitudes of Christ pronounced over five hundred years later. But Lao-tzŭ, like his great Indian contemporary the Buddha, was born before the world was ready for his ideas. Both teachings suffered much in later attempts to popularize them. Confucius followed, and though he discouraged many cruel and selfish practices he left, both in his living example and in his precepts, a strict ethical code which was somewhat lacking in the softer human qualities. Then, as now, there were sensitive spirits to whom the worship of the old gods and the customary shibboleths of the time seemed empty and meaningless and so to their need, as to the cry of the poet of ancient Egypt in 'The Song of a Man Weary of Life', merely moral precepts brought no help. In China, the deep, unsatisfied longing for release from pain and despair had to await the arrival of Buddhism. At the time of Christ's birth at Bethlehem a mission was on its way to China bringing the teachings of Buddha.

But even his healing touch could not cure all the ills of suffering souls, and men began to turn more and more to another company of divine beings to satisfy the more homely, human need for an active intermediary or patron saint. These beings were the Bodhisattvas. Enlightened human beings also might ultimately be admitted to their company through becoming seekers after Buddha-*Bodhisattvas* hood. Devotion to the acquiring of merit by charity and knowledge raised them through higher and higher planes of existence until they reached the condition of the Celestial Bodhisattvas, of whom the best known is called in India Avalokiteśvara, and in China Kuan-yin. These enjoy 'the highest beatification that the finite universe can give, and are only delaying their departure into the infinite stillness of Nirvāna in order to continue their works as loving guides and helpers of mankind towards happiness and spiritual sanctification'. Their gracious pose, their tenderness of expression perfectly disclose the gentle attributes of these celestial guardians. They became especially popular in China, where, in time, Kuan-yin was portrayed in female form and was known as the Goddess of Mercy. Thus the spirit of compassion latent in the Chinese character was first fostered by ancient ancestor-worship and the increasing sacredness of the family tie. Then, interpreted by Lao-tzū, disciplined by Confucius, idealized by the Buddha, it became at last each soul's personal link with the divine through

the loving-kindness of the Bodhisattvas. For they, who had been sons of man, had ascended into the celestial company of the sons of God and guardians of humanity. They were called 'the sons of the Buddhas' and their title *Bodhi-sattva* meant 'creature of enlightenment'. And not only were they heavenly guides and protectors but examples reminding every man that he too might attain their condition by acquiring merit through knowledge and good works. So it was that love and pity found free expression in the art of this great era of China's history. As the figure of the Virgin irradiates medieval Christianity, so the cult of Kuan-yin flourished in Chinese Buddhism; but as yet no sign appeared of the lapse into a certain sensuousness and sentimentality of aspect which, in later centuries, accompanied the change from Kuan-yin the masculine symbol of compassion to Kuan-yin the Goddess of Mercy.

The Southern School was founded by Wang Wei, *Wang Wei and the Southern School* who was a courtier and a physician and famous equally as a poet and a painter. His pictures were painted with the chief aim of interpreting a mood, and his works gave rise to the school most prominent in later times called 'The Literary Man's Painting'. His designs were notable largely because of their unusual contrasts—one of the methods whereby he evoked the desired mood. The most famous were the much-copied blossoming fruit-trees standing amidst snow; but scarcely less



Part of a Landscape Roll. After Wang Wei (8th century). Painting by Chao Mêng-fu (1254-1322) in colours on silk. *See also page 199.* Height of roll, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum.

PLATE XII



A Boy-Rishi Riding on a Goat. Painting in colours on silk attributed to Han Kan, but possibly Sung period. Length, 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum.

famous were the marvellous landscape paintings—immensely long scrolls with panoramic views of still lakes, bordered by trees and winding into the valley depths of distant mountains. The descriptions by those who had seen these pictures, and the treatment of the same subjects by later artists, show to what heights this landscape art had already attained at a time when in Europe the fine arts were practically non-existent. Wang Wei, when a successful man, was in the habit of buying liquor which he neglected to pay for, and Han Kan, the pot-boy sent to collect the money, used to while away his hours of waiting at the artist's door by drawing horses in the dust. Wang Wei was so struck by the boy's capacity that he paid for his training as a painter and Han Kan ultimately became one of the great men of this period: he always excelled at drawing horses. One of the paintings attributed to him has a universal attraction for visitors to the British Museum. It is the vigorously executed picture of a boy in fur-trimmed coat and fur cap riding on a monstrous white goat. He represents a Boy-Rishi—one of the Taoist genii—a bird-cage is slung from a blossoming plum branch which he carries over his shoulder and he gazes round him at the spring flowers and the smaller earthly goats which frisk round the feet of his supernatural mount. Another famous painting, 'A Hundred Colts', is known through later woodcuts (see Fig. 12). Its animation and the magnificent design displayed in the gambols of these

spirited horses reminds us that the emperor was still receiving tribute of the large (Supernatural) steeds from Ferghāna, and was reputed to have thousands in his stables.

Three hundred other painters of the T'ang period are known by name, but limits of space forbid a detailed account of them. A few, however, should be mentioned. Chang Hsuan—famous for homely subjects and paintings of women, Wei-ch'ih I-sêng, and his less distinguished father, Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na, who had come all the way from Khotan to work in China, the centre of civilization, and who introduced Central Asian types and technique. These, among hundreds of other scarcely lesser men, founded the greatest if not the most finished school of painting of the Far East. Their work, commanding in its noble simplicity, was full of joyous vigour—a quality sadly lacking in later art. Their influence spread to other lands but found its warmest welcome in Japan.

“The Japanese look to China as we look to Italy and Greece: for them it is the classic land, the source from which their art has drawn not only methods, materials, and principles of design, but an endless variety of theme and motive. As in the late nineteenth century Japan took over the material civilization of Europe, so, more than a thousand years earlier, she took over and absorbed the civilization of China, its art, its religion, its thought . . . The first great school of painting in Japan derived entirely from the grand and forcible style of the masters of the T'ang dynasty.”¹

¹ *Painting in the Far East*, Laurence Binyon, Arnold, 1934, p. 8

The idealized figures of the Indian deities were accepted by Chinese painters and sculptors. *Indian influence* The most usual pose, that curious sideways tilt, as if the god were about to dance, was emphasized by the prominent hips and slim waist. Another pose which came from India was the attitude of royal ease or kingly repose, as it is variously called, much used in statues of Kuan-yin. This is more common in sculpture than in painting and it is typical of both the T'ang and Sung dynasties, and shown in Plate XIX. The figure sits in relaxed, unconventional fashion, usually with the right foot brought up to rest on the seat of the throne and the right arm outstretched, hand down, and the forearm resting on the raised right knee. The left leg hangs in the usual manner of sitting figures but the left arm is braced with the hand out stretched on the throne-seat to help support the body's weight as it leans away from the up-bent knee. But other poses now appear in great variety. In the main, types from India were the most popular, but the figures always have a Chinese aspect and cast of face, for no mere copying ever seems to have satisfied the native craftsmen. Bronzes were still in favour, so much so that quantities of coins were melted down to provide metal for casting images. Wood figures were uncommon for temple statues until later, and the numbers of fine examples now to be seen in all the principal museums and collections are generally of stone. They show a continuation of the earlier tendency towards

slenderness and are entirely conceived in the round, with an astonishing success in displaying the curves of the body beneath the softly clinging horizontal curves of drapery. T'ang sculpture, taking the best from the Indian Gupta school, had become completely emancipated from the archaic and had begun almost to earn recognition as a fine art. Even the names of one or two outstanding craftsmen are known. But their work does not relate to similar figure sculpture of the early Italian Renaissance, which was more architectural and conceived as if with intention to emphasize the *planes* of the surface. Nor is the closest parallel seen in the masculine perfection of the Grecian classic age, but rather in the later, more rounded, and sensuous forms of the decline. In China the faces of the T'ang statues were less square than formerly, the eyelids were cut in parallel curves and the line of the lids was often continued towards the ears. An even richer array of jewelled chains and head-dresses appeared as time went on, while the skirts became longer and the method of carving the folds more complicated and ingenious. These folds were often looped up to show the beautiful lotus thrones which were now for the first time commonly used. Often they were mere pedestals carved in the form of an open lotus flower upon the centre of which the deity stood, but there were many varieties—all of them graceful and well proportioned.

The favourite Bodhisattva of this age was, as we

have seen, Kuan-yin and the favourite Buddha image was Amida, Ruler of the Western Paradise, who was usually shown seated, cross-legged, with his hands in his lap, lost in meditation. All these figures were originally coloured, traces of red, blue, and gold can still be seen upon them, with green and white upon the leafy sprays of flowers which they carry or which grace their thrones. Owing to imperial decree effigies of two other deities make their first appearance in every part of the empire. These are Vaisravana, a standing figure clad in armour, and Manjusri, generally shown riding on a lion. The former owes his popularity to the story that he appeared with a heavenly army in answer to the prayer of the emperor Hsuan Tsung and put to flight the barbarian forces. Manjusri, as the God of Wisdom, would naturally find favour in this age which glorified intellectual gifts and culture. All these figures and many more were to be seen in the numerous caves, of which the chief at this time were the rock-cut shrines of Kung-hsien, in the province of Honan, begun in A.D. 535 and continued to 867.

The late eighth and the ninth centuries saw a still greater richness and sophistication in glyptic art, when all the trappings and emblems were rendered with a voluptuous elegance. *Persecution of Buddhism, A.D. 844*
But again resentment, fostered by the Confucianists, was rising against the power of the priests, and in A.D. 844 the most terrible persecution broke out. On

three previous occasions during this period Confucianist statesmen had memorialized the throne indicting the Buddhists on various charges, and the followers of the religion, since the early years of the dynasty and its then unrivalled sway, had suffered much. Instigated by the Emperor Wu-tsung, who was influenced by Taoist advisers, the persecutors disbanded the communities of monks and nuns, turned back into money most of the bronze figures, and destroyed many thousands of temples and monasteries. From this catastrophe Buddhist art had not recovered when the T'ang dynasty fell, and although the religion was restored in A.D. 848 a period of decadence had set in. Wood, lacquer, and clay became the common materials, and expert copying of previous styles a usual thing. The glory of the Golden Age had departed, and incipient archaism, effeminacy, and over-elaboration marred all the expressions of religious art.

But before passing on to the next period an account must be given of a rapidly developing non-religious art. At the beginning of the chapter reference was made to the pilgrim I Ching's memoirs and the evidence that true porcelain existed in the latter part of the seventh century A.D. The next witness is the Arab merchant Soleyman who in 851 wrote that 'there is in China a very fine clay from which are made vases having the transparency of glass bottles; water in these vases is visible through them,

*Pottery and
Porcelain*

and yet they are made of clay'.¹ The Chinese records also note that vases of a thin, clay body of white and brilliant colour were made in a village near the now famous pottery town of Ching-tê Chên. They were called 'imitation jade utensils' and sent to the court as tribute. Similar wares came also from another village kiln. No authentic specimens are known to have survived in China itself, but, amazingly, shards have been unearthed half across the world at Samarra on the Tigris, the former residence of the Caliphs. These leave no possible doubt that true translucent porcelain was not only being made in China during the T'ang dynasty but was also exported to Mesopotamia (and possibly to civilizations farther west), and their exact date is fixed by the fact that Samarra was a city of mushroom growth, beginning and ending with the ninth century. Finds were first made by Dr. Sarre, who published a report on them in 1914. They varied in type considerably. One sort was of hard, shell-like, porcellanous stoneware with an almost white body that could not be scratched by steel and yet was transparent in the thin places. Another find was a fragmentary oval cup decorated with a fish in relief, surrounded by wave designs and birds on the wing. The late Dr. Laufer, in his analysis of the Samarra find, said '... there is no room for doubt that the

¹ This quotation and the notes in the rest of this paragraph are taken from *The Beginnings of Porcelain*, by Berthold Laufer, as previously acknowledged

piece in question is of real, white porcelain, and that it affords an example of the hitherto lost porcelain of the T'ang period' And there were other types, some resembling the world-famous celadon which was previously thought to have been first made much later, during the Sung dynasty True porcelain has also been discovered in Turkistan, but so far the finds are fragmentary.

The excitement aroused by these discoveries can be better understood when one realizes that this lost porcelain was an entirely new substance, more transparent, more beautiful than the rare white jade, yet wrought through the labour and ingenuity of man in China while Europe was still unawakened from the Dark Ages Nearly a thousand years were to pass before Western civilizations were able to make porcelain, and even to-day none of their manufactures equal the finest wares of the Flowery Kingdom. The famous celadon was invented at this time, for there are several references to it in Chinese literature There are no actual examples found in China though we have the specimens found at Samarra above mentioned, and there are in the British Museum several pieces of a contemporary Corean celadon taken from tombs of that country and period, which, concurrent Chinese writings state, closely resembled some of the Chinese wares ¹ From this time on Corean pottery owed much to Chinese example. Another indication of the inven-

¹ *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, R. L. Hobson, p. 39.

tion of porcelain is the reference in a tenth-century book on music which states that twelve cups were used as a type of musical instrument, and only cups of a porcellanous ware would be suitable for use as musical chimes ringing when lightly struck, for earthenware gives out a dull unmusical sound of uncertain pitch.¹ These humbler products of the potter also show an astonishing advance. The typical T'ang pottery is soft and white. It was enriched still with the old Han green lead glaze, but also with new lead glazes, a favourite form being decoration spaced with strongly incised designs. Another favourite was an irregular splashing of coloured glazes, green, amber-brown, and violet-blue, on a creamy-yellow ground. This form of decoration was adopted in Persia.² Then there are the graceful wine-jars and ovoid vases with serpent-like scroll-handles, so Greek in form—vases that make one feel that pottery had already reached perfection. The brush was used in painting wares—although it did not become popular till the Ming dynasty—and stamped and applied reliefs were common. The Chinese admiration for the magnificent breed of horses from Ferghāna has already been noted, and it is therefore natural to find that the favourite, and one of the most beautifully rendered subjects, in sculpture, painting, and pottery was the horse. It appears in stone bas-reliefs from the graves of the

¹ *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, R. L. Hobson, p. 39.

² *Persian Art, Pottery and Glass*, Bernard Rackham, p. 76.

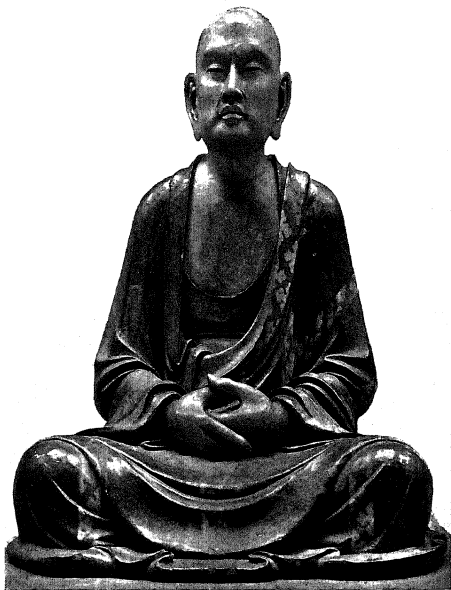
time and in the colossal winged horse recently unearthed in Shensi—relic of the monumental sculpture placed before the tombs. These were in the tradition current since the Chou dynasty, and were forerunners of the imposing avenues of statues which the Ming dynasty produced. But the most familiar examples are the mettled steeds of grave pottery. With arching necks, they champ and paw the ground, and though little more than a foot in length they give a vivid impression of curbed yet abounding energy. Many other animals were also modelled, the camel perhaps being the most convincing. The little tomb figures of actors, musicians, ladies, warriors, and a score of other subjects are very charming, but at the same time they serve to emphasize the curious Chinese bias in favour of animal sculpture. The human figures are, as usual, treated with only a fraction of the loving care lavished on the horses and camels which they lead or ride.

There is, however, an outstanding exception. At least one group is known in which human figures modelled in clay rank as masterpieces both of sculpture and ceramic art. They are the famous pottery Lohan, and eight of the original sixteen are known to have survived. Of these the finest is in the British Museum. It is a little more than life-size, made of a hard white pottery and glazed in the usual colours of the time, green and yellow, with a plum blossom design on the borders of the robe. The figure is seated on a rock—the embodiment of stillness and timelessness. The



One of a Pair of Horses in Combat. Pottery statuette. ? Tang period.
The Eumorfopoulos collection.

PLATE XIV



Seated Lohan. Ceramic statue with coloured glazes; a little more than life size. T'ang period. British Museum.

face is awe-inspiring and the empty eyes seem to be gazing into eternity—one of the most marvellous representations of contemplation and aloofness that has ever been made. At the first visit to it one immediately feels a presence there, which afterwards remains with one and seems to fill the whole gallery. It would be difficult to find a greater conception more nobly realized in the works of man of any age.

In Chapter IV reference was made to the rarity of well-preserved textiles surviving from the period of four hundred years which elapsed *Textiles* between the Han and the T'ang dynasties. But from the seventh to the tenth centuries numerous examples have come down to us. As in the case of porcelain, it is to a writer of the rapidly expanding Arab civilization that we owe a record of the excellence of Chinese textiles, and to the discoveries of Professor Pelliot and Sir Aurel Stein that we owe some of the earliest surviving pieces. One was brought back from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-Huang and now hangs in the British Museum. The subject is the Buddha with Bodhisattvas and disciples. The interaction of Chinese art with that of Sāsānian Persia has already been mentioned. It is especially apparent in the virile hunter and wild animal *motifs* prevalent in Sāsānian metal-work and woven silks, which occur, almost unchanged, in Chinese stuffs of the T'ang period. Another Persian favourite was the vine, and a most attractive design with interlacing tendrils, grape

clusters, and leaves occurs as a circular band both in Chinese silks and on the backs of bronze mirrors dating from this time. With the Sung the empire was lost, and so close contact with Muhammadan inspiration and western Asia also vanished, and another interval of between three and four centuries lapsed without leaving to us important pieces.

It is sad to have to record that the closing years of this great period were marred by the *Decadence* general adoption of poor materials and the growth of the tendency to copy old models. A certain degeneration occurred in all the branches of art. The times were out of joint, and forgotten were the years which left their impress so far afield that the islanders of the Pacific Ocean still call the Chinese 'The People of T'ang'. This was the epoch which aroused the undying admiration of Japan and led her to the belief that it marked the zenith of Chinese civilization. The immediate cause of the dynasty's downfall was a rising instigated by a Turkic chieftain, but there were deeper and more insidious causes. The intrigues of the eunuchs and the schemes of unscrupulous empresses and ladies of the Court had for long undermined the original firm foundations of the dynasty. An unwieldy empire without a commanding personality to govern it was split into manageable areas resembling proconsulates which readily seceded and became satrapies. Each of these with its military garrison was a potential enemy of the central govern-

ment, so that the situation exactly corresponded with that of recent years when China was divided amongst warring military (bandit) governors or *tuchuns*. It is therefore not surprising that this epoch closed with conditions similar to those which disintegrated the Han dynasty—confusion, civil war, and finally dismemberment of the empire.



FIG. 12. 'A HUNDRED COLTS'.

A reproduction from one of the pair of original 16th-century woodcuts after the famous painting by Han Kan. (?) T'ang dynasty. (See page 169.)

IX

THE SUNG DYNASTY, A.D. 960-1279

THE LOTOS-EATERS

WHY are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech,
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the cringing ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray,
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy,
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!
(TENNYSON, *The Lotos-Eaters*, Choric Song.)

AFTER the fall of the T'ang came a period of unrest which lasted for half a century. In this short space of time five dynasties arose and fell. Conditions were inimical to any continuous development, although there lived two or three painters who have earned the praise of posterity. The early copies of their works show a refinement and a delicacy learned from the declining period of late T'ang art, and prophetic of the perfection of these qualities under the following period of the Sung.

The Sung dynasty ruled over the first highly civilized community of China—civilized, that is, in the modern sense. No longer was the struggle for existence the primary aim of life; no longer was it wise or necessary to go armed about one's legitimate, even one's peaceful pursuits. There was time and opportunity to savour the sweetness of life. Culture spread and art and literature flourished. Aesthetic development was remarkable, especially in the realm of methods of expression—a growth ripening into a distinctive philosophic and mystic art, fruit of the self-communion fostered by the Ch'an or Contemplative school of Buddhism.

The founder of the Sung dynasty had to win his way to power by the sword, but thereafter he maintained his ascendancy by the exercise of practical common sense and peaceful methods wherever these were possible. During the previous interval of unrest and confusion the foreign empire had been lost. Contact

with central Asia and the West was thereby broken, and at the same time the incentive for continuing contact with India ceased with the eclipse of Buddhism in its land of origin. But Buddhism was now a Chinese religion and not in any way dependent upon the missions or the art *motifs* which India had in the past supplied. The Ch'an or Zen sect, the Contemplative school of Buddhism, which had affinities with philosophic Confucianism, was now in the ascendant and its influence found free expression in this age of culture and self-communion. Tendencies of such a peaceable nature were not, however, conducive to the realization of warlike aims, and perhaps they explain the disastrous failures to ward off the attacks of the northern Tartars. Ultimately the government was forced to retire to Nanking and watch with alternating apprehension and disdain their ancient enemies strengthening and consolidating a new kingdom in North China. Further defeats were in store, and finally the Sung court retired south of the Yangtse, dropping bribes as they went in continuation of the fatally foolish policy of buying off the invader. Nevertheless this was not an era of decadence and sensualism. It was rather an age of delicate and sensuous appreciation, of refinement and peaceful pleasures. It did not achieve military glory or a grandeur and nobility of artistic conception comparable with the T'ang, but it learnt from the T'ang and then developed by individual, contemplative ways its own distinctive and

modern type of civilization. Perhaps this individual, introspective character of Sung art was responsible for the continued decline of sculpture and the pre-eminence awarded to painting. For the sculptor was essentially a craftsman working with the primary object of supplying religious statues, whereas the painter was a cultivated man who was not interested in practical affairs but who became supremely successful in the realm of pictured experience as opposed to naturalism. Essayng to see life through his eyes we find that for him art reveals the individual character, the inner meaning and spiritual essence of the thing or episode portrayed. His flowers are not photographic imitations of nature but are drawn to convey the essential attributes of the theme—purity, tenderness, and sensitive life. A landscape is not valued as a record of a place but as a means of recording the sense of grandeur and isolation with which the distant mountain peaks impress the artist, or the feeling of sadness that steals over him as he watches the early twilight fading above a marsh from which the last bird wings its way home.

A legacy of the T'ang period stands forth in the large nobility of paintings of the Bodhisattvas and the Lohan, but now their grand sweeping lines are sweetened by a suavity of colouring which was the special contribution of the Sung. In the field of landscape art an utterly different development appears, for this is also the great period of

*Landscape
Painting in
Monochrome*

monochrome, a style of landscape painting which has remained the peculiar province of the Chinese to this day. This was the time when impressionism evolved—the impressionism which expresses the artist's emotion, which evokes his mood in the beholder and which we always associate with those aerial vistas called by the Chinese 'the mountain-water picture'. Their love of the country-side, the varied and beautiful face of their native land, has already been remarked upon. But it was the Sung artist who brought to his expression of the wonder and solemnity of the universe the profoundest depth of emotion and the highest technical achievement. In earlier years, when the time was ripe, the right man had always appeared to gather up the precious metal of past experience and forge it into links of wisdom which ever afterwards were to bind the future to tradition. It was so when the principles of calligraphy were pronounced: it occurred again when the portrait painter Hsieh Ho formulated his Six Canons of Painting. In the Sung period one of the great masters of landscape, Kuo Hsi, wrote his essay upon this branch of art, which, with the example of his pictures, was to mould the minds of all future artists. He deals not only with technique, the rendering of recession, the emphasis on the indispensable and the ignoring of detail, but also with the philosophic aspect and the individual artist's approach to his subject. And all this, it must be remembered, was more than five hundred years before the West had begun to

appreciate landscape for its own sake, much less paint it or apprehend its potentialities as means of expressing intimate emotion and stirring emotion in others.

Small wonder, then, that this age has been regarded as the most highly civilized of any before or since, nor that landscape painting has been considered its most significant revelation. But though this was the most typical as well as the most popular there were other categories in the full range of their art. Of these the small paintings of birds and flowers rank only a little lower. Their exquisiteness at first blinds one to their vitality and power, just as their truth to the loveliness of nature sometimes masks for a moment the fact that they are marvellous compositions each with an individual and moving message. Unlike the fate of numberless masters in the West, the good fortune of these artists lay in the immediate understanding and acclamation of their works. And not only were they acclaimed by their fellow countrymen, for the Japanese were equally enthusiastic and to this day have preserved scores of the finest of the Sung masters' pictures. The favourites of the Japanese were not always equally favoured in China, since standards of taste differed in the two countries, but almost all the great names were unanimously honoured. In landscape there is Kuo Hsi, whose work has already been noted and whose paintings, though rare, still exist: some of the finest are in America, in the Freer collection, Washington, and in the Metropolitan Museum,



Bird on Bough. By an unknown painter of the Sung period. Colours on silk. $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The Eumorfopoulos collection, British Museum.

PLATE XVI



Tiger by a Torrent in Rain and Wind. Attributed to Mu Ch'i (thirteenth century). Ink painting on silk. 60½ inches by 33 inches. British Museum.

New York. Early in the period there were three other great names, Li Ch'êng, Fan Kuan—who is specially famous for wintry landscapes—and Tung Yuan, famous for landscapes and animals. Of greater renown are Hsia Kuei and Ma Yuan, whose work is especially prized in Japan, where many magnificent paintings by the latter are still preserved. But perhaps the most splendid of his richly filled landscapes is that in the Freer collection, while Hsia Kuei's masterpiece is the famous 'Myriad Miles of the Yangtse'—a scroll, thirty-eight feet long, in the National collection of China. Chao Ta-nien, Li Ti, and Ma Lin (the son of Ma Yuan) are painters whose work shows the realism associated with the Northern school, while Mi Fei was a critic and a painter who, with the rapid play of a full brush, painted tree-clad mountain tops soaring above misty hollows, creating a style which influenced the later Southern school. Mu Ch'i was more versatile, for he is famed not only on account of his landscapes in monochrome but for his pictures of Buddhist figures and of animals and birds. In Japan his works were much sought after and more survive there than in China. The large and well-known painting of a tiger which hangs in the British Museum is from his brush. Last in time but not least in fame comes Liang K'ai, who is known for his paintings of saints as well as of landscape.

Li Lung-mien was in the front rank of those famous for other than landscape work. Examples of those

magnificent paintings of Lohan referred to at the beginning of this chapter are attributed to him. Another famous name is that of the Emperor Hui Tsung, many of whose paintings survive in European and American collections. His pictures of birds display the characteristics encouraged in the Academy founded by him and typical of the early period of Northern Sung, when small, naturalistic pictures of birds and flowers were popular. Among innumerable other artists were Chao Ch'ang, a flower painter, and Li An-chung, who painted birds and who is represented by a small work in the Eumorfopoulos collection.

There is not sufficient space in an 'Introduction' in which to deal more fully with this, the second of the two greater periods of pictorial art in China, but those who wish to study finer aspects of the subject cannot do better than read Laurence Binyon's *Painting in the Far East*, a book distinguished by the masterly handling of its theme as by the lucidity of its beautiful prose.

Marco Polo, the Venetian, gives us the most fascinating description of the life and environment of the Sung capital after it had moved once again farther south. He visited it near the close of the epoch when, in the last effort to escape from their enemies, the Sung emperors had removed the court to the beautiful city of Hang Chou. Here in a setting of romantic loveliness, of graceful palaces reflected in still lakes and numberless marble bridges spanning its canals, this gentle and courteous people found for a time a haven

from the northern Tartars. Wang An-shih, the one far-sighted statesman of energy and dictatorial temper in the eleventh century, had come and gone and most of his reforms, though for a time highly successful, enjoyed an equally brief existence. His unpopularity was due not to the reforms as such (for they were logical, necessary, and practicable) but to the mere fact that he was a restless reformer. The spirit of the age was quietist and contemplative; it chilled at the touch of practical necessity and its gaze turned inward, shrinking from cold fact. Such matters as agrarian reform, state finance, and councils of war troubled the placid stream of existence—a stream that like the smiling waterways beside which their lives were spent might have flowed on, scarcely moving, for ever. This happy community felt no need of change, no sympathy with noisy, uncomfortable reformers. Life was already good. The common people were well cared for. Marco Polo tells us that there were hundreds of public baths supplied with warm water, assembly halls open to any who wished to entertain their friends, and many amenities which modern civilizations of the West have as yet failed to provide.

The beauty-loving spirit of the age is reflected in the pottery and porcelain. The enthusiasm of the craftsmen who experimented as with a delightful new toy is seen in the extreme delicacy of such wares as the Ting. This was a shell-like, translucent white porcelain, of velvet-smooth surface.

*Pottery and
Porcelain*

The goal of the potters was the gleaming translucency of white jade, and the later, more fragile wares, decorated with tenuous lotus sprays etched lightly under the glaze, closely approached its frail and pearly lustre. These were known as 'white' Ting. The Ming dynasty produced a similar but unrelated type of an exquisite, egg-shell fineness so thin that the walls seem to be made of glaze alone. They were called *t'o-t'ai* (bodiless) porcelain. Of the Sung types, bowls with wide mouth and narrow foot are the most common examples. The rim is often divided by slight foliations and the outside into six compartments by engraved lines running from the indentations at the rim, and sometimes the rims were left unglazed as they were frequently placed upside down in the kiln for firing. Afterwards the rims were bound with a thin band of metal, usually of copper, sometimes of silver and rarely of gold. There were two rather coarser types, the 'flour-coloured' and the 'earthy' Ting, but in all these the most distinctive characteristic is the occurrence of 'tear drops' in the glaze. These were caused by the collection of the glaze at points where its flow over the surface ceased. The ware takes its name from Ting Chou, the town where it was made in the early part of the dynasty. But this was only one of many types. Later a wide range of wares and a great variety of glaze-tints were evolved, and as methods and materials improved the body substance became finer, the glaze thicker and its hues more lustrous. This change was due to the

discarding of the lead, used from the Han down to the T'ang period, in favour of felspathic glazes fired at a much higher temperature. Monochrome was preferred, and the colours were as pure as the shapes were simple. The most representative and satisfying are the Chun wares which were made at Chun Chou, in Honan. They were apparently in everyday use and were not much prized by Chinese collectors, but in the West they are especial favourites. This is largely due to their lovely colouring—some, *flambé* crimson, others, clear blue, often heightened by a splash of strawberry red or purple. The rich azure or lavender blue is softened by the nature of the thick lustrous glaze. The pieces were often small—bowls, jars, and flower vases—but the body was comparatively solid and heavy in both the 'porcelain' and the 'sandy body' or 'soft' Chun, as the two types are called. Possibly this was why it did not appeal to the connoisseur of the time (and this was an age of connoisseurs) for he demanded fragility and daintiness, ranking purity and suavity of form even higher than purity and softness of colouring. It was now that philosophy and historical research went hand in hand so that connoisseurship was the natural outcome in a people of such aesthetic maturity.

Archaeological discoveries aroused the greatest interest and many important books on the evolution of the arts were published. The dissemination of this knowledge was enormously

*Archaeology
and the
first printed
catalogues*

assisted by the recent invention of wood-block printing. It quickly superseded the old method of engraving on stone and was followed by the rapid development of book printing throughout the Sung period and later by the invention of movable type. These innovations, of course, anticipated the work of Gutenberg and other printers in Europe and profoundly affected the spread of culture in China. Ssü-ma Kuang's great history and many magnificent catalogues and encyclopaedias were compiled. One of the most important was the *Po ku t'u lu*, the catalogue of antique bronzes in the Imperial collection, illustrated by woodcuts. (See Fig 5) Interest was taken in bronzes as the most typical and one of the most time-honoured forms of aesthetic expression. This interest continued, and later, a catalogue of the Imperial Collection, the *Hsi ch'ing ku chien*, included seventy-one categories of bronzes, and in this collection the numbers of specimens in each category sometimes reach into the hundreds. But the passion for collecting had encouraged the growth of *Connoisseurs* a class equipped to supply any demand—fakers of old bronzes and forgers of ancient inscriptions. To their cunning are due the difficulties which beset the collector to-day, of finding, first, bronzes turned out by an honest Sung craftsman for everyday use, and, secondly, genuinely ancient bronzes which were not faked for sale by a dishonest Sung craftsman. These difficulties are enhanced because there had

PLATE XVII



Flower Pot. Glazed pottery with splashes and flecks of strawberry red and bluish purple. Sung dynasty. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

always been the occupation of casting bronzes whose design was founded on traditional models but which did not pretend to be antiques. Even to-day such are being made and sold. These are obviously new and without faked patina or forged inscriptions, whereas similar pieces made in the Sung dynasty are now obviously not new. they are a thousand years old and may have lain buried for the whole of that period and acquired a natural though fictitious appearance of an even greater age. In the same way famous paintings were copied and (at the time) were known as copies, but now it is almost impossible to distinguish between an original and a contemporaneous replica. Other forms of art such as carved jade, by their very directness and simplicity, lend themselves even more readily to expert imitation, and by their inherent nature, their immunity from the marks and ravages of time, create great difficulties of attribution.

Porcelain was a new achievement and therefore free from some of these disadvantages, but in time it too was copied both with honest and dishonest intent. The Chun wares described above unfortunately provide a comparatively easy and tempting bait for the expert potter. So, too, does the other product of the same kilns—the heavy vessels with brilliant *flambé* glazes whose colour in flecks and splashes ranges through bluish-purple to crushed strawberry and which were especially popular for bulb-bowls and flower pots. One of these, previously in a Chinese

collection, has the following inscription incised under the base: 'The Chien-fu palace. For use on the artificial hill of rockery and bamboos.'¹

Celadon The origin of celadon during the T'ang dynasty was mentioned in the last chapter. It now became one of the favourite types, partly because of the intrinsic beauty of its soft jade-green, sea-green, or green-grey tones, and partly because these tones are restful and harmonize so readily with other colours. The universal popularity of celadon is due to the achievements of two brothers named Chang who lived during the Sung period at Lung Ch'uan, in Chekiang. Wares made by the elder are called Ko and are exceedingly scarce, but those of the type made by the younger are well known. Deep bowls with a small foot, and flat dishes are the commonest shapes, but there were many others, especially in later times, for under the Yuan and Ming dynasties a large number of kilns continued to turn out a similar celadon but with a glassier kind of glaze. All peoples in all ages have admired this ware, so much so that the Chinese, when they realized it, developed a flourishing export trade and examples have been found in places as far apart as Japan, the Philippine Islands, Borneo, India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and Zanzibar. In contrast with the dainty pieces for imperial use, pieces for export were made with very thick and heavy walls, and this fact has been

¹ *The Art of the Chinese Potter*, R. L. Hobson and A. L. Hetherington, Benn, Pl 35.

pointed to as an example of the contempt the Chinese had for the foreigners with whom they traded. Bach, when he composed in the Italian manner, essayed something better than the Italians themselves, but (say these critics) the Chinese potter had no pride—cared nothing that foreigners should judge his skill by the coarse wares he sent them. This is an unfair criticism. Probably the chief reason for the comparative clumsiness of China's exported pottery was simply that the delicate wares made for home use would too easily have been broken on long journeys by junk and caravan. The first piece of China ware known to have been brought to England was a bowl of this celadon. This is Archbishop Warham's Cup, which was mounted in Tudor silver-work, and, since his bequest in 1530, kept at New College, Oxford. According to legend, these cups had the magical property of changing colour if the wine they contained was poisoned, and it is said that for this reason Saladin the Great always used one, thereby giving it the name by which we know it—celadon. A more probable origin is the complimentary use of the name of a popular stage personality of the seventeenth century—the green-clad shepherd Céladon.

In the Sung dynasty ceramic art at last came into its own—it was prized for its intrinsic beauty and not primarily for its usefulness. The *Chung-tê Chên* great incentive to all this development was not foreign influence (because China had lost the outlying portions

of her empire), but the influence and patronage of the emperor. The ruler and his court began to appreciate the beautiful wares and to collect them. The Emperor Ching-tê (1004-7) gave his name to the great pottery centre in the south and for centuries it has been known as Ching-tê Chên, the most famous pottery town in the world. This district, however, had been well known for its potteries long before: the earliest records even mention it as traditionally founded in the Han dynasty, so that we may assume that these kilns have been in operation for well over a thousand years. During the busy season the town is one of the most remarkable sights in China, though few people go there. There are over a hundred pottery kilns and a population of 400,000. Everybody and everything serves the pottery industry; the river bank is covered for miles with broken chips of china-ware and the town is built over similar debris, even the houses are built chiefly of fragments of fire-clay.

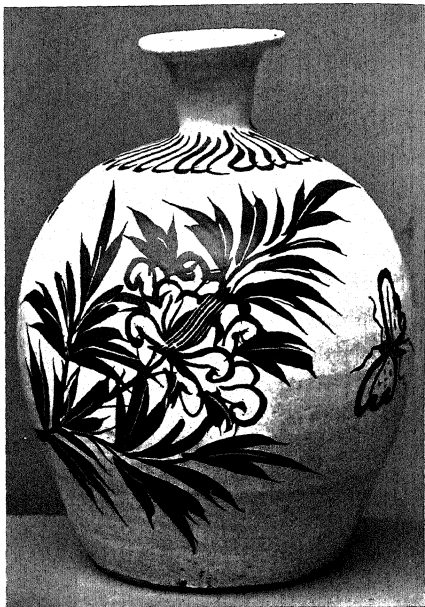
The site of Ching-tê Chên was chosen because everything necessary for making pottery and
Kaolin and porcelain happens to occur there. First, it
Petuntse is a good centre for export, connected by water with the great trade route of the Yangtse and with well-worn land routes to many of the principal cities. The river supplied water power for turning the primitive machinery of wheels, mills, and lathes, the forests gave abundant wood for firing the kilns, and in the hills around was fire-clay for building the kilns. But the

most important factors of all were the huge natural deposits of china-stone (*petuntse*), which was the glassy flux, and of white china-clay (*kaolin*), from which the body of the ware was made. This kaolin is the same as the soft white powder which can be bought in any chemist's shop, and, curiously enough, it was used medicinally in China centuries ago for the same purpose, namely, as a remedy for gastric complaints. The natural deposits of kaolin have become world famous; they were even drawn upon for export to Persia when Chinese potters were sent there to found a Persian centre for making porcelain. The china-stone, or petuntse, is a felspathic stone by nature allied to kaolin. When the two are mixed together the china-stone acts as a flux and it is this action which gives pottery its translucency, turning it into porcelain. The early discovery of the properties of china-clay and the experiments which resulted in the manufacture of porcelain are said to be due largely to the Taoist hermits who practised alchemy. In those days alchemy was synonymous with chemistry, and the preparation of clays and glazes is, of course, also a matter of chemistry. Kaolin, or china-clay, is first mentioned in old Taoist books and was used as a medicine very early in the Wei period. The alchemist's quest for the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Life, and other figments of the imagination, therefore resulted in something entirely unexpected but of more value to humanity. On the other hand, Professor Sir Flinders Petrie is credited

with the theory that early glazing on stone in Egypt may have resulted from the discovery of quartz pebbles which had been fluxed accidentally in a wood-ash fire, for this chain of circumstance would provide the essential process and materials.

The Sung potters were apparently the first to attempt to control the network of minute cracks in the glaze which goes by the name of crackle and which appears as an accidental feature on the Chun and some celadon, and on wares of earlier dynasties. Eventually they were able to produce this result and vary the spacing from small to large at will, and many pale-toned wares were apparently made with the intention of displaying this new and attractive feature. Many of the glazes of this time owe their soft effect to the innumerable microscopic bubbles of gas which are sealed up in them, a phenomenon induced by the very high temperatures at which the Sung potters learnt to fire these wares. This extreme heat had still other effects: for example, when a jet of smoke in the kiln reached the surface of a grey-blue or lavender glaze, the copper which was used to obtain these colours suffered a chemical change and a consequent change of colour, resulting in a red patch. The Chinese potters, however, were terrified by these mysterious marks like splashes of blood. They thought there was a devil in the kiln, and contemporary historians relate that they tore down the kilns and broke up the porcelain. Gradually they became used to the phenomenon

PLATE XVIII



Vase of Tz'ü Chou Ware. Sung dynasty. The decoration is painted in brownish-black on a creamy-white glaze. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

and even in time learnt the cause and how to control it: the result we see in the eighteenth-century variegated *flambé* glazes. Increased knowledge and experimentation also produced the other varieties of blood-red glaze, the beautiful *sang-de-bœuf*, cinnabar red, sealing-wax red, and so on. But even late in the twelfth century a writer states that these furnace-transmutations—the red splashes—occur ‘when the planet Mars in the Zodiac approaches its greatest brightness, then things happen magically and contrary to the usual order’. Another special class of Sung porcellaneous specimens is the Tz’ü Chou ware—usually white glazed stoneware with designs in brown or black, although red and green on a white ground is known and forms one of the few types of polychrome painted decoration of the Sung dynasty. Pillows made of this ware (legend states) are specially to be prized because he who sleeps on them will preserve clear eyesight. Tz’ü Chou might accurately be translated ‘Crock City’, and its products have been made for 1,300 years, from the Sui dynasty to the present day, but their conservative character makes it difficult to date them.

Scores of other types could be described, but a type which ought not to be overlooked is the Chien yao. Owing to the brown-flecked, black glaze, bowls of this type were called ‘hare’s fur cups’ and were in great demand as tea-bowls. They were especially popular with the Japanese, who called them ‘Tem-moku’ bowls, a word derived from the Chinese *T’ien-*

mu. *T'ien-mu shan*, the 'Mountain with eyes in the sky', has twin peaks where the heavens are mirrored in twin pools. It was from a temple on this mountain that a Zen priest brought one of these bowls to Japan during the Sung dynasty and thus they found their name. The beautiful black and golden-brown glaze won immediate popularity, and the bowls were used for the tea ceremonies and contests of the time.

Another and perhaps the most lovely of all the Sung types was the *ying ch'ing*. In this the body of fine porcelain equalled anything which was afterwards made, and the specimens that have survived were, till recently, identified with the *Ju yao* which in Chinese literature is famed as second only to the legendary *Ch'ai* porcelain of which no trace has survived. The term *ying ch'ing* means 'shadowy blue', and Chinese writers have excelled themselves in the poetic phrases employed to describe the two types. 'blue as the sky after rain, clear as a mirror, thin as paper, resonant as a musical stone of jade.' It is not surprising, therefore, that this period, although so early in the history of porcelain making, is regarded by the Chinese as the greatest. Other types and forms of decoration, new colours and materials came into use but none excelled in sheer purity of form and hue, or in quality of porcelain, the finest wares of the Sung dynasty.

Sculpture, on the other hand, continued its decline. Never really regarded as a fine art but rather as a craft

PLATE XIX



Kuan-yin. Carved and painted wood figure seated in the attitude of 'royal ease'. Sung dynasty. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

—a useful adjunct to religion—its decay was hastened by the use of perishable materials—clay, plaster, lacquer and wood (See Pl XIX.) Kuan-yin, seated in the attitude of royal ease, continued to be a favourite in this and the Ming period, usually *Sculpture* as a wood figure carved with rather softer and more sensuous lines than formerly. During the Five Dynasties and the Sung, Yuan, and Ming periods the making of images in bronze almost ceased. In contrast with the former practice of melting down coins to make images, bronze figures were now frequently called in so that they could be melted down and cast into money. It was this which developed the use of wood and clay for sculpture and which no doubt encouraged the fashion of painted banners as substitutes for the lasting materials. The Sung, Yuan, and Ming periods saw a revival of archaism. Old sculptures were copied, just as old bronze vessels were copied: the sculptor-craftsman looked back instead of forward and the spontaneity of the earlier periods was lost.

The Sung government, harried at first by the Kitan and then by the K'in, in their southern retreat enjoyed a false security based upon an alliance with the enormously powerful Mongol empire which had arisen in Asia and which now threatened the K'in. The Mongol hordes attacked, wiped out the K'in empire, and swept on to conquer the Sung. The boy emperor, the last of his line, escaped in the arms of one of his ministers; but not for long. The minister fled to the sea, but

finding that all was lost drowned himself and his royal charge. The Chinese empire had fallen, and though nothing could have stemmed the tide of Mongol invasion, the Sung dynasty fell, an easy victim, through a too exclusive devotion to a war of words and the arts of peace.

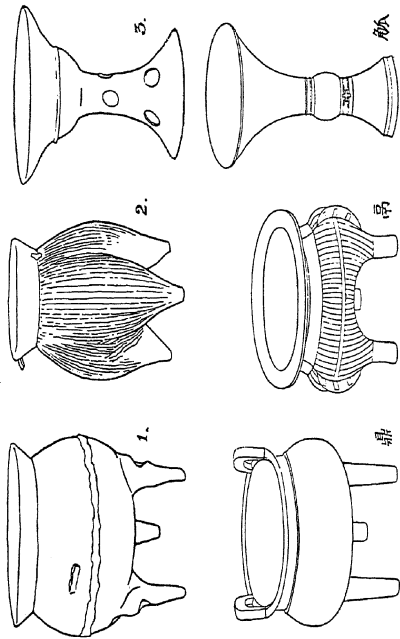


FIG. 13. THREE NEOLITHIC POTTERY FORMS.

Line drawings of types found by Dr. J. G. Andersson, and below them, for comparison, three woodcuts of bronze vessels taken from the great Sung Catalogue of the Imperial Collection, and there labelled as belonging to the Chou period. (See pages 15-16, 44, and 194.)

X

THE YUAN AND MING DYNASTIES, A.D. 1260-1644

THE IMPERIAL PALACE OF KUBLAI KHAN¹

A description written about 1275 A.D. by MARCO POLO, the traveller from Venice and the friend and envoy of Kublai Khan at Peking

'You must know that for three months of the year the Great Kaan resides in the capital city of Cathay. In that city stands his great palace and now I will tell you what it is like.

'It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length. It is also very thick and a good ten paces in height, whitewashed and loop-holed all round. Inside this wall there is a second. In the middle of this enclosure is the Lord's Great Palace, and I will tell you what it is like.

'You must know that it is the greatest Palace that ever was. The palace itself has no upper story but is all on the ground floor. The roof is very lofty and the walls of the Palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with representations of dragons (sculptured and gilt), beasts and birds, knights and idols and sundry other subjects, and on the ceiling too you see nothing but gold and silver and painting. On each of these four sides there is a great marble staircase leading to the top of the marble wall and forming the approach to the palace.

'The hall of the palace is so large that it could easily dine 6,000 people, and it is quite a marvel to see how many rooms there are besides. The building is altogether so vast and so rich and so beautiful that no man on earth could design anything superior to it. The outside of the roof also is covered with vermilion and yellow and green and blue and other hues, which are fixed with a varnish so fine and exquisite that they shine like crystal, and lend a resplendent lustre to the palace as seen for a great way round. The roof is made too with so much strength that it is fit to last for ever.

'Between the two walls of the enclosure which I have described there are fine parks and beautiful trees bearing a variety of fruit.

¹ *The Book of Marco Polo, the Venetian*, translated by Sir H. Yule, Murray.

There are beasts also of sundry kinds, such as white stags and fallow deer, gazelles and roebucks and fine squirrels of various sorts, with numbers also of that animal that gives the musk, and all manner of other beautiful creatures, insomuch that the whole place is full of them . . . and the Great Kaan has caused this beautiful prospect to be formed for the comfort and solace and delectation of his heart '

THE Mongols now ruled with a savage discipline one of the largest empires ever known. It stretched across Asia from eastern Europe to the Yellow Sea and enrolled China in its list of subject states. But once more the Chinese genius for assimilating conquerors showed itself. Within a remarkably short space of years the Mongol (Yuan) dynasty was employing the vanquished people in all sorts of posts, and before the end of their century of rule the Chinese civilization was again in the ascendant. Kublai Khan showed himself to be a wise as well as a powerful ruler, encouraging the unbroken sequence of Chinese traditional culture to such effect that it is often impossible to distinguish between the ceramics and other productions of the Sung and Yuan periods. But another aspect of the Mongol supremacy was the outflow of art *motifs* from China—for instance, the lotus and the Chinese dragon now begin to decorate Persian pottery. The outstanding event of the time, therefore, is not any change in the stream of tradition but rather the spread of its influence over a wide area of Asia, through the expansion of the empire, and its ultimate effect on Western culture.

*The Mongol
Horde, A.D.
1260-1368*

Of Kublai Khan's exploits as conqueror, as ruler, as builder, so much has been written that little more need be said. The writings of Marco Polo have just been quoted, and it is to this indomitable and observant Venetian that we owe our most vivid pictures of a China which at the end of the thirteenth century was far more highly civilized than Europe. The 'stately pleasure dome' at 'Xanadu' which Coleridge attributed to the Great Khan was probably the Bamboo Palace of the Sung emperors which he ordered to be taken down and re-erected there. Although this palace has not survived, other monumental works of the period still exist, among them the splendid three-sided archway through the Great Wall erected about 1345. The fearsome aspect of the sculptured guardians that watch over this gateway recall that Kublai Khan was a Buddhist who practised Lamaism, the barbaric Tibetan form of the religion; but they also show that fine stone reliefs were still sometimes carved in this decadent and imitative age. The Yuan dynasty is famed, however, more for the development of the drama and the novel than for any great achievement in the realm of art, although the names and works of a number of painters are known.

The last of the painters described in the chapter on the Sung dynasty flourished in the south during the thirteenth century. But although the Southern Sung had retired before attack they were still harried by their warlike neighbours until the Mongol invasion,

which had swept across Asia, had spent its fury in that last conquest and had been itself engulfed in the unsounded depths of Chinese tradition. The most celebrated painter of this time was Chao Mêng-fu who was descended from the founder of the Sung dynasty and who, commanded to attend the Mongol court, eventually became a friend of the emperor. Horses were this painter's favourite subject, but his work has been so much copied and his name so often forged that it is difficult to distinguish which of the many paintings attributed to him are genuine. One of the most famous was called 'Eight Horses in the Park of Kublai Khan' and many copies of this also are in existence. The British Museum has one of his finest compositions, again a study of horses. Another renowned painter of this period was Jên Jên-fa who is represented in the Eumorfopoulos collection by the picture 'Feeding Horses in a Moonlit Garden'. Many other painters who lived during the Yuan dynasty left examples of their work which are now well-known exhibits in the principal museums of Europe and America. Their style in the main followed and intensified the naturalistic trend of the late Sung tradition, but lacked its vitality, and artists soon began to pay a too self-conscious attention to the technique of their craft.

At this date Chinese painting began to influence the art of two other nations. Partly, no doubt, through the encouragement of Kublai Khan who, as we have seen, professed the Tibetan form of the Buddhist

religion, Lamaism, the typical banners and other manifestations of barbaric Tibetan art soon showed the refining influence of Chinese conceptions. At the same time Persian painting came under this influence, again through the agency of the Mongol dynasty, for the conquests of Genghis (Chingiz) and Kublai Khan had united Persia and China under one suzerainty. In later years this interchange of influences was renewed as an indirect result of the campaigns of the most barbarous of all conquerors, Timur, who is perhaps better known as Tamerlane.

Chinese silk weavings were now being imported by Western civilizations, and green, pale blue, and buff damasks, some with floral designs and Chinese characters combined with Arabic inscriptions, have been unearthed in Egypt. Other remnants include woven silks and brocades brought to the West by traders and still preserved in the churches of Europe. In addition, the direct impulse given by Chinese craftsmen to western Asian and European design can be seen in the ornament on textiles made in the West at this time. With the contraction of the empire under the following (Ming) dynasty these impulses ceased and they were not renewed till over a century later. Then, with the arrival of Portuguese traders, Chinese art was rediscovered. A flourishing traffic in porcelain, silks, and rugs gradually grew up and European craftsmen redoubled their efforts to copy Chinese designs.

PLATE XX



The Fairy and the Phoenix. Painting by Wu Wei (A.D. 1458-1508) in ink, lightly coloured, on silk. 58 inches by 37½ inches. British Museum. See page 211.

From the trend towards academic interest in technique under the Yuan dynasty it would be natural to infer a hardening of this tendency under the Ming. And this hardening, crystallizing at last into convention, ultimately took place, but in the opening years it was held in suspension by the triumphant spirit of patriotism. The expulsion of the Mongols and the founding once more of a native dynasty seemed to uplift the nation's heart so that the inevitable decline was for a time arrested. In the interval displays of magnificent richness were the rule, as if art were reflecting the joyous pyrotechnic celebrations of a liberated people. This grandeur and gaiety of bold curvilinear forms and the burning intensity of colouring are seen more immediately in the polychrome porcelain, but they glow too with scarcely less brilliance from the paintings. At the same time there was at first a school which practised definitely and successfully in monochrome, continuing the tradition and within the limits of the earlier refinement and delicacy of the Sung. To this group belong many famous names, among them Lin Liang, Wang Li-pên, and Wu Wei. Wu Wei's magnificent sweeping design, 'The Fairy and the Phoenix' hangs in the British Museum, and is illustrated here in Plate XX. The later school, distinguished by the richness of colouring which is more typically Ming, seems to aim first at decorative effect—the romance of nature, not the spirit of nature.

*The Ming
Dynasty,
A.D. 1368-
1644*

Painting

Painters who worked in this style are Lu Ch'i, Ch'iu Ying, and T'ang Yin, while another, whose vision embraced a wider horizon, was Wên Chêng-ming. These and many scores of others lived and worked during this flourishing period in China's history. But side by side with the new and more gorgeous colouring and new varieties of subject, continued the traditional ones. Pictures of birds and flowers and landscapes, portraits and Buddhist figures, groups of women and children—genre paintings which reveal the gaiety and charm in the daily life of the time—all are represented in numerous examples housed in museums all over the world. One of these perennially attractive pictures is 'The Earthly Paradise' in the British Museum. It has, like the ceramic statue there of the Buddhist Lohan, an irresistible magnetism, but for very different reasons. The latter draws its votaries by its atmosphere of power and austere serenity and the sheer genius of a mortal sculptor whose work can still evoke for us the semblance of a living presence. The former invites us to delight again in the ever-renewed pleasures of a vernal country-side in which a charming company disport themselves—age and youth set in a landscape of romance and ethereal beauty. It is sad to reflect that an artist who could paint so delightful a scene did not found a school to carry on and develop a style, free, flower-like in its colour harmonies, and fresh as the spring-time. But the fatal disposition of the Chinese towards pedantry, the looking back rather than for-

PLATE XXI



Porcelain Jar. Painted on the biscuit in coloured glazes within raised outlines. (Turquoise blue, buff, and white on a dark blue ground.)
Ming dynasty. Victoria and Albert Museum.

ward, was already visible. The Ming period closed in conservatism marked by a decaying vitality brought about by the too assiduous copying of old work. Tradition once more had fastened its grip on art. The Manchu conquerors ultimately forced the Chinese to wear the pig-tail as a badge of slavery—it might also be taken as a symbol of their future slavery to tradition in the realm of painting.

The full-bodied, sturdy shapes of Ming porcelain and their gorgeous colouring are signs of the prosperous community which produced them. From the busy factories early in the period the typical vessels were large wine jars of bold outline, tall flower-vases and bowls, their surfaces richly flooded with a variety of harmonious glaze-colours. The curving outlines of the floral or other designs were strongly marked by different methods: one of these, used in the T'ang dynasty, was the scratched line which emphasized the drawing but which also formed a miniature 'ditch' successfully separating two different fields of colour. Another method was to lay down a miniature boundary along these outlines in the form of a narrow thread of clay, the glaze pigments were then laid in directly on the unglazed body or 'biscuit'. Yet another group had flower sprays in relief which raised the decoration slightly above the ground and so made it easy to separate the different colours applied to the decoration and the background. The porcelain trade under the Ming dynasty had begun to prosper, and

while many new developments occurred the now traditional types such as the Ting, Chun, Tz'ü Chou, and celadon were also produced. The fragile white egg-shell Ting was almost the only class of traditional wares in which the Ming potters improved much upon the technique of previous centuries, possibly because white was almost the only monochrome in which they were interested. In the main, fashion had veered towards richness of colouring and striking effects in decoration, and as the court now carefully controlled the output of the imperial porcelain factory at Ching-tê Chên its ideas of regal splendour strongly affected the potter's craft. About eighty per cent. of all the pottery made in China now came from the factories there, and the craftsmen were spurred on to greater efforts by their tyrannical patrons. For the native dynasty, which had been welcomed with patriotic fervour, before long proved itself to be a harsher taskmaster than the Mongol barbarian Kublai Khan. Its unreasonable demands can be seen in the size of the fish-bowls, barrel-shaped seats, and other heavy wares which were almost too large to fire successfully. Their painted decoration introduces the first extensive use of cobalt, which afterwards was to have such an unhappy effect in the later developments of the well-known blue and white porcelain. The ease and cheapness with which these painted designs in blue were made led to the abuse of the method and to the tremendous output of roughly finished, poorly designed

pots of the last hundred years. But in early days many charming effects were obtained, and it must not be forgotten that then only a consummate artist was thought worthy to work in the new technique, for an even greater mastery of the brush was necessary than in painting on a flat surface. And added to the handicap of the biscuit's curving surfaces was its absorbency—more thirsty even than soft paper—so that every stroke, once drawn, was fixed beyond the possibility of alteration or erasure. An incentive to the development of blue and white was the occasional importation of Persian cobalt of an extraordinarily rich colour. 'Mohammedan' blue, as it used to be called, was new to China and, since it had the deep pulsating brilliance of the unrivalled Persian faience of this period, was infinitely superior to the native cobalt, which was apt to show a greyish tinge. In return the Persians borrowed ideas from China and in their imitations they outlined their dark blues delicately with black. The breadth and dignity of design combined with skilful drawing in this colour render the blue and white of the Ming superior to the later, and in technical perfection, more sure and sophisticated productions of the Ch'ing dynasty.

But perhaps most typical of the time were the enamels, they were usually painted upon blue and white porcelain. Rare examples occur in the Sung dynasty, but it was not till the Ming period that their gem-like colour range was fully appreciated

Enamels

Of the two principal types those applied direct to the biscuit were known as 'three-colour' (*san ts'ai*), and those painted over the white glaze were called 'five-colour' (*wu ts'ai*), but in neither case is the selection of colours so strictly limited as the names suggest. The last group included turquoise green, one of the tints perfected by the Ming potters and a great favourite among them. The use of glass-enamels on metal was referred to earlier in this book as an instance of one of the few arts which seem to have been discovered and appreciated first in the West and exported to China comparatively late. It was through her contact with Byzantine civilization that the great Chinese empire of the T'ang period first learnt many new things which were already old in the West. Among these was the art of enamelling on metals. This new art probably influenced the use of enamels on pottery which (as already mentioned) developed during the Sung dynasty but did not achieve great popularity then. There were two main classes. *champlevé*—in which the metal was scooped out to make a series of shallow depressions which were afterwards filled with a finely ground paste of the glassy material, and *cloisonné*—in which the design on the copper or bronze vessel was outlined in metal wire soldered to the surface, and the shallow compartments (or *cloisons*) thus made filled in with the enamel-paste. To keep the thin layer of paste firmly attached to its shallow metal trough they used a highly adhesive glue made from

the root of a water plant, and this (being a vegetable glue) carbonized and left no trace in the subsequent firing. In both *champlevé* and *cloisonné* the concluding stages of the process were the same. The vessel or other object, after the coloured paste had been laid in, was baked in a miniature kiln or stove until the paste had set. Then it was withdrawn and allowed to cool, and the newly hardened surface of variegated enamels, divided by the just visible outline (the upper edge of the copper wire) was burnished on an emery wheel. Finally the whole vessel, enamelled surface and exposed metal top and base, was highly polished, or perhaps gilding was added where copper or bronze rims were not considered a sufficiently fine foil to the richness of the surface decoration.

The Yuan dynasty favoured this craft, the Ming still more, but it never attained the heights it reached in Russia or in Italy during the Renaissance—still less the popularity now enjoyed by the Limoges enamels. The rich effects obtainable with *cloisonné*, however, appealed especially to the Ming taste, and most of the finer work belongs to this period. It is distinguished by a certain luminosity and purity in the hues obtained—a charm which later disappeared as (during the Manchu dynasty) the craft became more stereotyped and mechanical, the *cloisons* less beautiful and finely made, and the colours harder and denser in effect.

In porcelain another new colour was the *chi hung* or 'sacrificial' red. This was not only used for drawing

designs on the biscuit (under the glaze) but often in the glaze itself, giving a deep yet brilliant blood-red hue. Like so many of the gorgeous colours of the time it owed its origin to copper and was related to the crushed-strawberry splashes which, as we have seen, sometimes occurred accidentally in the lavender blue of the early *Chun* wares. The most brilliant of the reds which now developed, the deep ruby glaze, was actually believed to owe its colour to the use of rubies ground up to form the glazing material. But in fact such treatment would of course have ensured the loss of the distinctive colour immediately such a glaze was exposed to the great heat of the kiln. However, the 'precious stone red', as it was called, may have owed its brilliance, though not its colour, to the admixture of another and less precious stone, the cornelian, and this theory would account for the origin of the ruby legend.¹

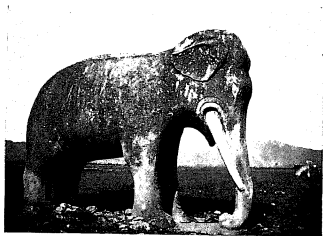
In the latter part of the period a new and very lovely white porcelain was made in Fukien, and called by that name, but later it was given by the French a name perhaps more familiar to us, *blanc de Chine*. One of the favourite subjects in this milk-white ware is Kuan-yin, now accepted and modelled no longer as a god but as a Goddess of Mercy, and very closely resembling in type European figures of the Virgin. This impression is increased by all the details of the goddess-figure—the shawl head-dress, the long rosary-like necklace,

¹ *Early Ceramic Wares of China*, A. L. Hetherington, Benn.



Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Small seated figure in white Fukien porcelain—(*blanc de Chine*). 17th or 18th century. Victoria and Albert Museum.

PLATE XXIII



Figures from an Avenue of Colossal Stone
Statues at the Ming Tombs.

sometimes by the compassionate expression of face, and often by a small child-figure shown in her arms. Although other forms were made, figure work most delighted the Fukien potters and shows their achievement at its highest. The tradition is still carried on and both modern and earlier productions of this flourishing industry are in every detail almost identical.

The fine sculpturesque quality of the Fukien porcelain figures leads naturally to the consideration of the larger relics of the sculptor's art. (See Pls XXII and XXIII.) The chief are the colossal stone statues of the Ming tombs, the ruined but still imposing avenues of figures guarding the approach to the last resting-places of the emperors. Fine as they are they do not bear comparison with the nobility of T'ang heroic art. Harsh and dominating in execution and aspect, they illustrate the gulf which divides the docility of the Sung temperament from the virility of the Ming. The third emperor of the dynasty transferred the capital from Nanking to Peking and endeavoured to rival the earlier splendour that city had displayed under Kublai Khan. Tyrannical despotism shows along the face of the gigantic battlemented outer walls and the vast palace enclosures. The Forbidden City and most of the monumental architecture of Peking, the brick façades enclosing mile-wide sections of the Great Wall, the imperial tombs laid out across the valleys, all owe their impressive grandeur to the dominating force and

*Architecture
and
Sculpture*

ruthless oppression of Yung-lo and despots like him. The patriotism which had fired the people to flock to the standard of a rebel Buddhist priest—the ‘Beggar King’—and to overwhelm the Mongols, had then raised the native dynasty to power. But the first Ming emperors soon quenched this patriotism with oppression and savage massacres designed to crush opposition to an entrenched and absolute monarchy. The vast buildings of this time call vividly to mind the blood and tears which must have dripped upon their frowning walls. Their massive timber columns still stand as if defying the attacks of time and tempest which have swept away all or almost all the architecture of earlier ages.

But while bloodshed and oppression darken the pages of the earlier history of the dynasty, a superficial brilliance and effeminacy mar the close. The rise to power of the eunuchs, and the consequent intrigues and degeneracy of the court, aroused resentment and eventually insurrection amongst the people. The ultimate collapse of China’s sea-borne trade had been foreshadowed by the arrival of Portuguese ships and merchants at Canton in 1517, followed by the Dutch and the English. The Jesuit fathers arrived and were well treated at court, and the last Ming Emperor and the Dowager Empress embraced Christianity. China was now in closer touch with Western civilizations, their scientific progress and belligerent trading methods, and already the seeds of friction were being sown by

the clash of foreign interests in the Pacific colonies of the Chinese Empire. The shadow of fresh invasion from the north crept almost unheeded across this empire—racked as it already was by foreign interference and civil war—and the Ming dynasty fell, leaving to the powerful Manchus the task of quelling insurrection which it had failed to perform.

Description of Fig. 14

From the doors of a shrine in the temple, Lin Ngai Ssü, near Kuan-hsien, Ssü-ch'uan ? 17th century. Monsters among foliage surrounding a conventionalized ? *Shou* character, carved in hardwood, with traces of colour—red, blue, and white.

Measured and drawn on the spot by the Author



FIG. 14. ONE OF A PAIR OF PIERCED
UPPER PANELS.



Lun. Wheel, enveloped
in flames.



Lo. A Conch-Shell.



San. State Umbrella.



Kai. Canopy.



Hua. Lotus Flower.



P'ing. Vase.



Yü. A Pair of Fish.



Chang. 'Entrails.' An
Endless Knot.

FIG. 15. 'THE EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS OF HAPPY AUGURY.'

Special favourites in many kinds of decoration.

XI

THE CH'ING DYNASTY, A.D. 1644-1912

ELABORATION AND ECLIPSE

O World! O Life! O Time!
On whose lost steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before,
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—O never more!

SHELLEY

*Refinement
then
Decadence* THE new invaders came from Manchuria, where for many years a confederation of clans had been steadily growing in power and ambition. They claimed descent from the Kin Tartars, the tribe which a few hundred years before had driven the Sung government south of the Yangtse and which had in turn been overwhelmed by the Mongols. Now, for the second time in history, they attacked, and successively defeated three Chinese armies and were only stopped at the fortified frontier. Then they turned upon and conquered the remnants of the Mongol peoples. After this they began seriously to entrench their position and to model their culture and system of government on the Chinese pattern. In the meantime, in 1644, the Ming dynasty was threatened by a revolt so menacing that the loyal faction called in the help of the warlike Manchus who crushed the revolt, but claimed the throne as their reward. After many years, in which sporadic risings in support of the Ming

princes were put down with the utmost severity and bloodshed, the whole empire at last resigned itself to accept the Manchu régime. The conquerors had confidently taken the title 'The Great Ch'ing Dynasty' even before they captured Peking, but their self-assurance was fully justified. From their House came many fine rulers, among them two of the greatest emperors China ever had. The first and less famous was K'ang Hsi, whose name will always live as the title given to the refined and delicate porcelain whose production he did so much to encourage. In the early years of the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty revolt and reprisal had practically stopped the potters' work at Ching-tê Chên, as did the massacres which had marked the founding of the Mongol Yuan dynasty. But with the accession of K'ang Hsi a saner temper prevailed. At eight years old he came to the throne and reigned under the control of regents, and at fourteen he assumed full power, and from that time displayed the virtues of an ideal ruler.

But the loyalty which the young Manchu emperor aroused in the Chinese people was inspired as much by his appreciation of their art and culture as by his virtues as a ruler. Early in his reign he had decreed the formation of imperial schools and workshops at Peking for the study and practice of all the crafts, including lacquer, jade, glass, enamel, and porcelain; but the project fell through. Then he encouraged the porcelain industry at Ching-tê Chên by increasing the

rates of pay, appointing a resident superintendent from the court, and by other measures. This beneficent interest not only endeared him to his people, it stimulated them to create works of such perfection that the period has become more famous for its porcelain than for any other kind of art

Both the science and the art of porcelain making were never so closely studied. At the same time the appreciation of foreign countries was valued to the full and an extensive export trade grew up, especially in the enamelled wares and the blue and white. The latter had appealed to the Persians for some time past, and their imitations of it, showing a darker tone of blue with a glassier glaze, are well known, as are the pots in Persian shapes made by the Chinese for the Persian market. The interest of foreigners on the spot also went unchecked. The Jesuit missionaries were by this time entrenched in their favoured position at court, and one of their number has left a vivid picture of Ching-tê Chên as he saw it during the period of its greatest prosperity. This is contained in the letters of the Jesuit missionary, Père d'Entrecolles, who wrote from Ching-tê Chên, early in the eighteenth century, that the population was then about a million people, serving directly or indirectly three thousand furnaces which at night made an arresting and terrifying spectacle, like a huge burning city spouting flames at innumerable points.

A description of the use of china clay (*kaolin*) and

china stone (*petuntse*) has already been given, but Pere d'Entrecolles wrote fully on the *How porcelain was made* methods of manufacture, and this, combined with information from Chinese sources, has been admirably summarized by Mr. R. L. Hobson, of the British Museum, as follows ¹

'Both the clay and the stone passed through drastic purification at the factory before they were made up into a dough-like mass ready for the potter. The glaze was a mixture of china stone and burnt lime and fern ashes, the superior qualities of glaze containing a higher proportion of the stone.

'In preparing the ware, moulds were used for the shapes which required them, but rounded objects were "thrown" on the wheel. If the vessels thus formed were to be decorated in blue, they were now ready to receive the colour which was applied to the dried porcelain body. The blue material (cobaltiferous ore of manganese) was collected on the hills of Shao-hsing and Chin-hua in the province of Chekiang. It had to be roasted, crushed to powder and laboriously refined before it was fit for use. It was then mixed with water and painted on with a brush. The next process was the application of the glaze, either by immersing the vessel in a tub of liquid glaze or by spraying the glaze on through a tube. The older process of painting the glaze on with a large brush was now little used. The final processes in the preparation of the rounded ware were the trimming of the foot which had been left rough for handling, and the writing and glazing of the mark.

'The formed, painted, and glazed vessel was now ready

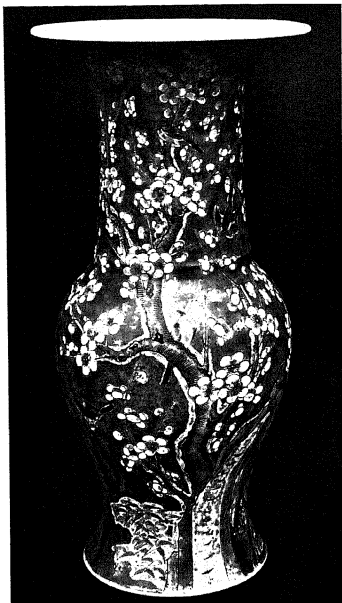
¹ *The Later Ceramic Wares of China*, R. L. Hobson, Benn, 1925

for the supreme operation of firing, but to protect it from damage in the kiln it had to be placed in a fire-clay case or seggar. The seggars were carefully stacked in the kiln, which measured about ten feet in width and height and something more in length. The furnaces, fed with wood, were then lighted and kept burning for about three days. On the fourth day, when relatively cool, they were opened and the potter knew if his venture had been a success. Père d'Entrecolles tells us that so many firings were unsuccessful in his time that many potters were ruined and the trade was something of a gamble. Much might, however, be done to ensure success by the proper propitiation of the god of "Fire and Blast." The ware was now withdrawn from the kiln. If it had been painted with blue and successfully fired, it came out with a brilliant blue decoration complete and ready for the market. The glaze covering is necessary for the development of the blue colour: without glaze it would merely fire black.

'If, on the other hand, the ware was destined to be painted in enamel colours, such as the *famille verte* and *famille rose*, it now proceeded to the enamellers' sheds, and received its decoration in vitrifiable enamels applied by the brush to the glazed surface. To develop these enamels and to make them adhere to the surface another firing was necessary, but only at a comparatively low temperature and in a small kiln or stove called a "muffle." If gold was included in the decoration, yet another firing at a still lower temperature was needed. The final operations were grading the ware and packing it for transport. The inferior grades of porcelain were apparently reserved for local sale.'

Enamel colours painted over the glaze, which are referred to in the passage just quoted, and those

PLATE XXIV



Porcelain Beaker. Painted in enamel colour of the *famille verte* on a green ground. Period of K'ang Hsi (1662-1722). The Author's loan collection, Birmingham Museum.

painted direct on the biscuit, now reached the period of their greatest perfection. The most famous were the *famille verte* and the *famille noire*. In the former a soft yet vivid green and in the latter a deep lustrous black predominated, while these were supported by yellow, violet-blue, aubergine purple, and coral red. Fine specimens can be seen in most of the principal museums but they are now extremely rare, and the typical large flower vases of these two groups fetch fabulous prices. But they were never cheap—not even in the eighteenth century—for at that time China was exporting to the West the finer and more fragile products of her kilns, a new development made possible by improved conditions and methods of transport, and those in most demand were the blue and white and the *famille verte* enamelled porcelains.

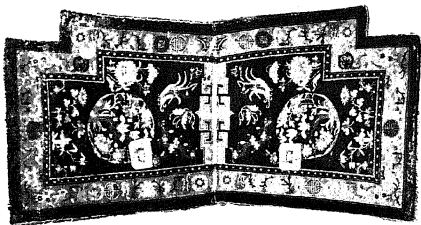
Perhaps the supreme achievement of the time and the group which is still most popular is the ovoid 'ginger jar' with decoration of sprays of white blossom on a deep blue ground. They go by many other names, hawthorn jars and prunus jars being the most usual and the most suitable. For these beautiful things are truly poems in porcelain. The lovely sapphire intersected by a network of black lines like the cracking of ice over the sparkling blue waters of earliest spring-time: the fallen sprigs of white plum-blossom—first of flowering trees—that float upon it, portray the revival of gaiety in a world released

from winter's clutches. For the prunus jar was made to carry New Year's gifts, and in China New Year's Day falls later than with us. The Chinese, too, knew the value of their porcelain, for the custom was to return it to the sender of the gift. And, in spite of its name, the gift within the jar was not ginger but fragrant tea.

European
trade, seven-
teenth century

Mention of blue and white porcelain, tea, and ginger recalls that the Dutch, following the Portuguese, developed a flourishing China trade during this reign. Perhaps the most beautiful things then imported were the textiles. The Chinese were quick to seize their opportunity, and numbers of silk hangings and embroideries were made specially for the foreign market and largely for the Church. In course of time other seafaring nations increased the demand, and early in the eighteenth century the East India Company were shipping to England quantities of woven silks, silk-embroidered satins, painted silks, brocades, tapestries, and cut velvets. Of these the latter are the least attractive, for velvet-weaving was not a Chinese craft and was never appreciated there as it was in Europe. On the other hand the native craft of tapestry-weaving had been practised for over a thousand years, and this helps to account for its delicate loveliness and its long-continued popularity in the West. Of all its forms the magnificent robes enriched with gold thread are perhaps the best known.

PLATE XXV



Woollen Pile Saddle Rug. With decoration of butterflies amongst blossoming prunus, magnolia, lotus, tree-peony, chrysanthemum, &c. 18th century. The Author's collection.



Chest of Wood. With decoration of raised and incised lacquer, partly gilt, on a black ground. 18th century. Height, 2 ft. 8½ inches; length, 5 ft. 3 inches; depth, 2 ft. 4½ inches. Victoria and Albert Museum.

The English ships followed the Dutch, and both carried lacquer, enamels, jades, and carpets with more prosaic cargoes. Preference for blue and white porcelain was the direct cause of the great output of the well-known blue and white ware made in imitation of porcelain by the Dutch potters of Delft. And this preference, in turn, was the impulse which spurred the Chinese potters to make wares specially for the Dutch market, and later on these interactions contributed to the craze for *chinoiserie* to which Europe succumbed in the eighteenth century. This craze will be referred to again in the latter part of this chapter. The passion for blue and white (or Nanking, as it was afterwards called) seems to have blinded collectors of that day to the great charm of a large number of other groups.

Of these groups one of the finest is the monochrome porcelain. Always less popular in England than in France (where they were given *Monochromes* ormolu mounts) and, more recently, in America, they only receive the full appreciation they deserve in China itself. It would be natural to expect that this period, which reproduced the types of previous periods, would not neglect the soft, clear colourings of the Sung dynasty. But the eighteenth century was an age of experiment as well, and so we find the potters trying new methods and adding to the lovely though limited range of Sung glazes. The K'ang Hsi monochromes are consequently too numerous to list, but the

most famous are the mazarine, a dark blue named after Cardinal Mazarin, sky blue, turquoise (varieties of which are likened by the Chinese to birds' feathers—the 'kingfisher blue' or 'peacock green'), 'powder blue,' the velvety effect of which was obtained by blowing the colour over the surface so that a powdering of minute dots alighted on it, a brilliant black shot with purple which collectors call 'ravens' wing', a soft coral red, an iridescent green called 'snake-skin green', and a similar type in yellow mottled with other colours called 'eel-skin yellow'. Lang T'ing-tso, a famous viceroy, is said to have given his name to two other rare and beautiful kinds of glazes, the apple-green *Lang Yao* and the ruby-red *Lang Yao*, better known by its French name *sang de bœuf*. The truth of this story is in doubt, but there is no doubt about the loveliness of these two colours. The *sang de bœuf* was a revival of the 'sacrificial red' mentioned in the last chapter, but now it attained to an even greater lustre and brilliance. Both colours were derived from copper, and later in the reign of K'ang Hsi another famous red evolved from the same process—the priceless peach-bloom glaze so much sought after by collectors. Also late in this reign the *famille rose* first appeared. As the name implies, rose red varying from rich crimson to a delicate pink predominates in this scheme of decoration. The colour was enthusiastically welcomed by craftsman and patron alike, for it was one of the most striking of the new inventions and was

derived from gold, but it is more typical of the following Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung reigns, and in its debased, over-elaborate form is still in demand to-day.

Unfortunately it is the later, more vulgar productions which are familiar to us in the West; and for a very good reason. The great demand for 'china' gradually resulted in the export of inferior wares in Canton, rapidly turned out, gaudy copies of the fine traditional forms have been made specially for the foreign market for the past two hundred years. But during the last great periods (throughout the eighteenth century), even the imperial porcelains are not beyond criticism. Standards of taste will of course always vary, but most connoisseurs agree that in spite of the purity of colouring, the faultless design and drawing of the decoration, and technical perfection in the potting there is something lacking. This something eludes definition but is perhaps best represented by the word spontaneity. From K'ang Hsi to his son Yung Chêng and his grandson Ch'ien Lung this fugitive quality becomes weaker and weaker, while its substitutes, cleverness and sophistication, hold the field for a time against utter degeneration.

Nevertheless porcelain was the art *par excellence* of the epoch, for signs of approaching decadence were visible in the (now) lesser arts. Sculpture of the heroic type was already dead, and the sculptor's place had been usurped by the carver in wood and ivory,

the lapidary, and the goldsmith. Delightful trinkets and painstaking models in miniature occupied the unhurried attention of workers in jade and agate, rock crystal, and coloured glass. Snuff-bottles, writing sets, vases not intended for flowers, and incense-burners unsullied by incense smoke became the fashion. *Clorsonné* and other forms of enamelled metal, although never considered worthy to rank with other arts, were still being made. Individual pieces were often larger in size than formerly and the technical ability of the craftsman was of a high order, yet the result shows a tendency to over-elaboration and prettiness. Painting enamels on copper became a flourishing industry, and Canton enamel was soon more sought after in the West than it was in China. The attitude of the Chinese scholar and connoisseur to enamelled copper is well put by one of them who, towards the end of the eighteenth century, wrote.¹

'One often sees incense-urns and flower vases, wine-cups and saucers, bowls, and dishes, ewers for wine, and round boxes for cakes and fruit, painted in very brilliant colours, but, although vulgarly called porcelain, these things have nothing of the pure translucency of true porcelain. They are only fit for use as ornaments of ladies' apartments—not at all for the chaste furniture of the library of a simple scholar.'

Lamoges enamels were brought to China by Jesuit missionaries and copied there and the craft developed

¹ *Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, *Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook*, vol. ii, p. 85



Blossoming Prunus Tree. Model in jade and other semi-precious stones standing in a pot of Canton enamel, 18th century. The Baroness D'Erlanger's collection.

on exactly the same lines as the Limoges enamels in France and the Battersea enamels in England. In China the craft deteriorated just as other crafts had, and no work of artistic importance has been done since the close of the eighteenth century.

The same is true of painting. Imitation of earlier styles, preoccupation with technical niceties, and pedantry in general mark the prolific *Painting* output of this time. It was an age of great erudition and found expression more readily in writing about great paintings than in producing them. The most celebrated work of this kind is the *Imperial Encyclopaedia of Calligraphy and Painting*—a colossal task decreed by K'ang Hsi in 1705 and undertaken by eleven artists and scholars who in three years produced a work of one hundred books and sixty-four volumes dealing with the history and every aspect of pictorial art. The Emperor himself wrote the preface with his vermilion pencil.¹

But though the painters were now moved by an academic interest in technique and by pedantic archaism this interest has preserved for us many fascinating details about the earlier artists, their methods and their ideals. Although no longer painted with the same spontaneity, landscape was still regarded as the highest form of expression, because the created universe embraced all living things and was to them as much alive as the human beings which are a part of

¹ See footnote on p. 234

it. The moods of nature were as real to the artist as his own moods. The streams, trees, and flowers were drawn with a sensitiveness which brings vividly before us the artist's own conviction that these were sentient things. Ever since the Six Canons of Painting had been laid down Chinese artists had affirmed that the first canon—spiritual harmony and rhythm manifesting life in movement—was the highest achievement. Of two of the great critics who discussed this canon, one, writing in the eleventh century, said that if the artist's ability to impart this quality to his work was not innate it could not be learnt, another, writing in the seventeenth century, said 'By reading ten thousand books and travelling ten thousand miles one can cultivate something approaching spiritual rhythm.' The painters of the eighteenth and following centuries followed the advice of the later critic, but their study and travel have only persuaded us that the earlier writer was nearest to the truth. The traditional subjects were painted with academic correctness but with spiritual lifelessness. Hackneyed renderings were the rule, even of delightful themes like 'The Three Friends in Winter', as the bamboo, the pine, and the prunus were called. In this subject the first two earned their name for their evergreen leaves, the prunus—as the earliest flowering tree—was loved for its late winter blossoms which open while its branches are still bare of leaves. Moreover the ideas of loyalty, strength, and sweetness are also implicit

in the pliant bamboo, the sturdy pine, and the blossoming prunus. But while the painters made less of these charming traditions than formerly, neither they nor the court could make anything of the portraits in the European style which were executed by the two Jesuit missionaries Pères Attiret and Castiglione. These Fathers had been appointed court-painters by the emperor, and their work, of course, showed foreign characteristics such as high lights and cast shadows, mathematical perspective, and the conventional well-filled background which offend against Chinese standards. Eventually they were forced to make brush drawings in the Chinese style, some of which are still preserved, though more as curiosities than works of art.

This episode occurred during the period which followed the reign of the great K'ang Hsi. He was succeeded by his son Yung Chêng, who lived till 1736, when his heir Ch'ien Lung came to the throne. The two reigns together comprise a period of great activity and similarity in their art productions, of which the chief was still porcelain.

The enamelled porcelain changed in character. The *famille verte* gave way to the new favourite, the *famille rose*. Various shades of crimson and rose-pink fill the backgrounds and bejewel the decoration, giving a novel form of gaiety and delicacy unknown to the K'ang Hsi palette in which green, black,

Yung Chêng
and Ch'ien
Lung,
1722-96

Porcelain

and yellow had predominated. While it was an age of imitation and clever copying of traditional types, it continued to be an age also of experiment, which often resulted in colour schemes in the ornament as fantastic as the new shapes evolved in the body of the ware. The contrast between the attitude of the Chinese and the Persian potters to their craft has been well put by Mr. Bernard Rackham, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, as follows: 'The Persians had a sure sense of ceramic form; in this they out-rivalled even the Chinese, whose curiosity to explore every kind of technical process more often betrayed them into the perpetration of non-ceramic forms and decoration.'¹ Although Mr. Rackham refers to an earlier time these words are also applicable to later wares, for the characteristic Chinese attitude tended to become more and more emphasized as the eighteenth century drew to a close.

Ching-tê Chên had seen many able directors, one of the most famous being T'ang Ying, whose term of office lasted from 1728 to 1749. To his encouragement the workers in the imperial porcelain factory of this time owed much, and we owe much to his many writings on ceramics which provide a large part of our knowledge concerning conditions, materials, and methods. Among the types most frequently found are the paper-thin egg-shell porcelains, translucent hexagonal lanterns with pierced panels and decoration in

¹ *Persian Art, Pottery and Glass*, Bernard Rackham, Luzac, p. 75

PLATE XXVII



Porcelain Dish. Painted in enamel colour of the *famille rose*. Mark and period of Yung Chêng (1723-35). Victoria and Albert Museum.

famille rose enamels, delicate vessels including dinner services specially made to the order of foreigners, with foreign coats of arms or with quaint Chinese versions of Western themes and Biblical subjects. Some of the most beautiful were the white saucer-dishes on the inside surface of which sprays of leaves and flowers were painted in delicate line and charming colour. Sometimes the backs were solidly filled in with the rich crimson of the *famille rose* palette, and this group is called 'ruby-backed' and is much sought after by collectors. The floral decoration of these painted porcelain saucers is in a style of elegant naturalism and the whole effect is exquisitely dainty and sophisticated. They belong to the earlier part of the period but the tradition persisted throughout the century, and even to-day cruder but quite pleasing copies are being made.

There is little to be said about the other arts. The seeds of decadence had been sown and they germinated everywhere. Yung Chêng's *Architecture* reign saw the retreat from Asia and retirement from the trade routes of the high seas. It also saw the phenomenal growth of the Secret Societies and of disaffection. The accession of Ch'ien Lung to the throne arrested this decline, for he was a great conqueror and administrator, a painter-poet, an exponent of calligraphy and patron of literature and architecture. But though his conquests in West China and the Asian border enabled his country to regain

much of her lost prestige, he was powerless alike to dam the ebbing tide of culture and to stamp out the Secret Societies. Some of Peking's most imposing buildings were erected by him, but again in the traditional style, usually indeed slavishly copying older buildings. The finest of these was the Pi Yung Kung, Imperial Hall of the Classics. the most spectacular was the Temple of Heaven. The latter was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground because an impious centipede dared to climb on to the golden ball at the top—so it is said—and it was rebuilt in the same style, roofed with the same wonderful cobalt blue tiles, late in the nineteenth century. But this and the three white marble, circular terraces of the Altar of Heaven have too often been described to merit further attention here.

Ingenuity, prettiness, sophistication, and precious-
Decline ness mark the decline in the last half of the eighteenth century, and this decline was accelerated rather than delayed by the interest in Chinese art which Europe displayed as a result of growing trade and increasing knowledge. For foreigners were fascinated by the strangeness of colour and design and the elaboration and intricacy of these dainty new toys. They did not trouble themselves to discover whether finer things had been made in the past. Everything Chinese was quaint and delightful, and almost everything they saw was the product of an age of decline.

The Ch'ing Dynasty

241

China's the passion of her soul,
A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl,
Can kindle wishes in her breast,
Inflame with joy or break her rest,
Some gems collect, some medals prize,
And view the rust with lover's eyes;
Some court the stars at midnight hours,
Some dote on Nature's charm in flowers.
What ecstasies her bosom fire,
How her eyes languish with desire,
How blest, how happy should I be,
Were that fond glance bestowed on me,
New doubts and fears within me war,
What rival's this? A china jar!

*The craze
for 'Chinoi-
series', 1750
onwards*

GAY.

This was the period which saw the extraordinary vogue of *chinoiserie* in England, a fashion which went to such lengths that Peking was considered by many a more suitable goal for the Grand Tour than Paris. Two factors encouraged its growth. First there was the already widespread craze for collecting which accompanied the empire-building of eighteenth-century England and which Gay has satirized in the verses just quoted. And then came the 'discovery' of Chinese art which resulted from the closer trade relations with China, especially the voyage and subsequent publications of Sir William Chambers, the famous architect. His rise to fame owed as much perhaps to good fortune as to his deserts. As a youth he had visited Canton, where he made a number of drawings

of the smaller and 'prettier' buildings such as kiosques and houses. In the mid-eighteenth century he published in England a book with drawings of these Chinese designs. He also built at Kew, among other erections in a so-called Chinese style, the well-known pagoda—perhaps the largest and worst of the many ugly and un-Chinese monuments of this absurd craze. Fortunately his fame is more securely founded upon the other monument for which he is chiefly known, Somerset House. But other, less scrupulous, publications of designs in 'the Chinese taste' competed with that of Sir William Chambers, which, for all its faults, at least had the merit of giving authentic information in its plates Chippendale—the celebrated designer of furniture—gave up adapting French designs to English needs and made his name by following the prevailing fashion. The fanciful and extremely effective ornament he evolved, largely from the drawings of Sir William Chambers, has earned him the name 'Chinese Chippendale'. Sir William Chambers died in 1796. In the same year died the great Chinese emperor Ch'ien Lung, and with him the last manifestations of Chinese art which can also be called great.

A rapid degeneration followed his death. The great
The eclipse emperor had been powerless to fight all
of art, the adverse conditions and tendencies of
nineteenth his age and, for different reasons, Chinese
century art suffered eclipse just when European art was being

extinguished in the chaotic changes accompanying the industrial revolution. But the nineteenth century brought disaster on the heels of decline. The Western peoples had lost interest in art, they worshipped not beauty but money and power. Their vanguard of traders heralded an invasion of less merciful philistines in succession to that of the Manchus. Both the art which these philistines introduced into China and that which appealed to them there was, in the main, bad art. The two cultures interacted to each other's disadvantage. In addition to such tragedies as the so-called Opium War other catastrophes occurred.

The T'ai ping rebellion was organized by a Chinese professing Christianity, who declared war to the death on the Buddhists. The persecution reached such proportions that the government found itself impotent in the face of a country-wide army of rebels who massacred and burnt in the name of Christ. Many thousands of beautiful temples were destroyed, their libraries burnt, their paintings and sculpture defaced or thrown into the nearest river. An eyewitness has said that for many days together the Yangtse was choked with the floating wreckage of temple buildings, dismembered figures, and other debris—precious relics of China's past greatness. Ultimately the Chinese government called in the help of the foreigner to quell the most menacing rebellion and persecution China had known for three hundred years. The insurrection was at

*The T'ai ping
Rebellion,
mid-nineteenth
century*

last put down, chiefly owing to the genius of 'Chinese' Gordon.

The last and lesser catastrophe was the Boxer Rising. During this revolt, and the subsequent reprisals, the great Han-lin Academy was burnt and thousands of priceless literary records went up in flames. Many temples and palaces in Peking were damaged and looted, and the famous Summer Palace outside Peking (as in the T'aiping rebellion) suffered worse treatment than the others.

Since that time the lack of a strong central government and the consequent neglect of ancient monuments, which followed upon the collapse of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1912, then civil war with its burning and looting, have decimated what beauty was still left. Latterly the 'frightfulness' incidental to wars of invasion, and the wanton destruction by bands of brigands and other riff-raff calling themselves 'Communists', have piled still higher the mounds of ruin. Unscrupulous dealers' agents, taking advantage of the widespread apathy of the people in face of these grievous calamities, reap a ghoulsh harvest of damaged and neglected works of art and find a ready sale for them in the foreign market. And where they chance to discover cave-shrine sculptures or temple figures still intact but too large to carry away, they decapitate them and sell the heads to antique dealers abroad. Small wonder, then, that numberless Chinese whose hearts bleed at the fate

of their great country, seeing as yet no single ray of hope, express in other words the sad thought quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

When will return the glory of your prime?

No more—O never more!

But there is hope. Recently formed archaeological societies in China, backed up by government support, will do much to help. Further, the changed spirit of Western countries, resulting in their growing interest in her art and sympathy with her plight, will surely find expression in practical measures to aid this, the greatest civilization of the Far East.



FIG. 16. ONE OF A PAIR OF DRAGON MASKS FOR RING HANDLES.

(The latter missing.) From the entrance doors of the famous temple, Er Wang Miao, Kuan-hsien, in Ssü-ch'uan. Typical of 18th-century work. In hardwood, carved, with traces of painting and gilt. (This temple has since been burnt down.) Height and width 11 inches.

From a drawing made on the spot by the Author.

APPENDIX I

PRONUNCIATION OF CHINESE NAMES

Vowel Equivalents

<i>a</i>	as in	<i>father</i>	<i>ia</i>	as in	<i>yarn</i>
<i>ai</i>	„	<i>aisle</i>	<i>ie</i>	„	<i>siesta</i>
<i>ao</i>	„	<i>loud</i>	<i>ieh</i>	„	<i>yea</i>
<i>e</i>	„	<i>bet</i>	<i>iu</i>	„	<i>adieu</i>
<i>ê</i>	„	<i>err</i>	<i>j</i>	„	the French <i>j</i> (<i>joie</i>), &c
<i>eh</i>	„	<i>say</i>	<i>o</i>	„	<i>or</i>
<i>ei</i>	„	<i>feint</i>	<i>ou</i>	„	<i>owe</i>
<i>en</i>	„	<i>men</i>	<i>u</i>	„	<i>flute</i>
<i>ên</i>	„	<i>fun</i>	<i>u</i>	„	the French <i>u</i> (<i>une</i>), &c.
<i>êrh</i>	„	<i>err</i>	<i>uai</i>	„	<i>wight</i>
<i>i</i>	„	<i>machine</i>	<i>uei</i>	„	<i>weight</i>

Aspirates

<i>ch</i>	„	<i>jerk</i>	<i>p</i>	„	<i>back</i>
<i>ch'</i>	„	<i>churp</i>	<i>p'</i>	„	<i>pack</i>
<i>k</i>	„	<i>go</i>	<i>t</i>	„	<i>dab</i>
<i>k'</i>	„	<i>king</i>	<i>t'</i>	„	<i>tab</i>

Other Sounds

<i>hs</i>	„	<i>hush</i>	<i>ssü</i>	„	<i>ace</i>
<i>chuh</i>	„	<i>churp</i>	<i>tzü</i>	„	<i>adze</i>
<i>shuh</i>	„	<i>chivalry</i>			

APPENDIX II

THE CHIEF EVENTS IN THE BUDDHA LEGEND DEPICTED IN PAINTING OR SCULPTURE

The Bodhisattva, the future Buddha, descends from Heaven.
Queen Māyā dreams of him as a white elephant approaching.
Dream interpreted by Brahmans as the conception
As confinement draws near Queen Māyā goes to visit her
parents.

The Lumbinī Grove Nativity, Birth, First Seven Steps, Bath.
Adoration of the Nāga Kings, Nanda and Upananda
Mother and child return to Kapilavastu
Infant brought to temple images do obeisance
Miraculous faculties of the child at school.
Magical supremacy at archery tournament and wrestling
match.

Marriage to Yaśodharā after first meeting.
The Four Outgoings and the Four Ominous Signs
Renunciation of the world, and birth of his son Rāhula.
Departure at night from Kapilavastu at age of 29
Cutting of the hair and discarding of jewels and robes.
Asceticism and wanderings for six years in company with the
five Mendicants

Abandonment of asceticism: desertion by the five Mendicants
Eating of food offered by Sujātā bath in Nairāñjanā River.
Gift from the grass-cutter on the way to the *bodhi*-Tree.
The Enlightenment Māra's vain attack: Buddhahood.
Offering of the Four Bowls
Journey to Deer Park near Benares: First Sermon on the
Law

Return to Kapilavastu Nanda forced to become a monk
Building and dedication of First Monastery at Śrāvastī.
Visit of Indra near Gayā.
Offering by the monkey at Vaiśālī.
Great Miracle at Śrāvastī heretics confounded
Visit to Queen Māyā in Heaven, and descent by triple ladder.

Devadatta's attempts on the life of the Buddha
 Death or *Parinirvāṇa*
 Partition of the Relics

BUDDHIST IMAGES

The Mudrā or Gestures of the Hands

1. 'Protection' Hand lifted, fingers extended and pointing upwards, palm to front
- 2 'Charity' Hand dropped, fingers extended and pointing downward, palm to front
- 3 'Wheel of the Law', the gesture of teaching Hands together in front of breast A finger of one hand touches the other hand, of which the thumb and another finger are joined at their tips
- 4 'Meditation' Hands, with fingers extended, lie together on lap of seated figure, palms upward. Generally one hand rests upon the other; sometimes fingers interlocked.
- 5 'Discourse' Tips of thumb and index or third finger touching
- 6 'Touching earth' Arm and fingers extended, and pointing downwards, palm behind. The gesture of Buddha, seated under the *pippala* tree, when calling Earth to witness during Māra's assault
- 7 'Adoration' or 'offering service' Hands, with fingers extended, joined palm to palm in front of breast Exhibited by figures attendant on Buddha

APPENDIX

CHINA

<i>Date B C</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
Legendary and Pre- historic Age			New Stone Age Earliest picture-writing symbols, and carved bones Yang Shao culture settlements Bone, stone, and jade implements and weapons some prototypes of later forms Unglazed pottery hollow-legged tripod and other cooking vessels From Kansu settlements — fine painted grave-pottery, urns, &c
About 3000			
About 3000- 2500 ? 2852	Fu Hsi	Alleged discoverer of the Eight Trigrams and of writing	
	Shên Nung	'The Divine Husband-man'	
? 2600	Huang Ti	The Legendary Yellow Emperor and his empress Alleged discoverers of bronze-casting and silk culture	? Beginnings of bronze-casting
About 2250	Yao and Shun	The ideal rulers Alleged discoverers of the Calendar, the method of organized government and of music	
? 2206	Hsia The Great Yu, founder	Controller of the waters Founder of the Nine Bronze Cauldrons (Tripods) Division of the land into nine provinces	Finds of carved jade, bronze, &c, not definitely authenticated
? 1766	SHANG-YIN		Quantities of inscribed tortoise-shell archives, and oracular inscriptions Bone, horn, and

III

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
End of New Stone Age and beginning of use of wrought metals	
Painted pottery of Susa	
Painted pottery from Anau, Russian Turkistan, resembling the painted pottery from Kansu, China	Sumerian culture, beginnings of writ- ing, stone statues, stele, &c
Hieroglyphic inscriptions	Elamite culture Rise of first true Egyptians The Ancient Empire in Egypt
	Oldest Aegean culture
The Pyramids of Gizeh	The Egyptian Pharaohs, Cheops, Chephren, Mycerinus
The Sphinx	
	Indus Valley culture
	Sargon I of Agade, Babylonia
Stage-towers in Babylonia	
Temple of Ammon at Karnak	The Middle Empire in Egypt
	The code of laws of Hammurabi en- graved on stone About 2000 B C
Palace of Knossos, Crete	
Cyclopean masonry in Crete	Hyksos (Shepherd) dynasty in Egypt.
Acropolis of Tiryns	Aegean culture
	The New Empire in Egypt.

Appendix III

CHINA

<i>Date B.C</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
			ivory carvings Expert bronze-casting and jade carving Coloured pottery, (? accidentally) glazed pottery The Dragon, Elephant, 'Ogre's Mask', Cicada, 'Cloud and thunder' pattern, &c, appear as <i>motifs</i> in 'animal style'
		Development of the patriarchal system	Carved antler, now in the British Museum
		Great power of priest-diviners	Great beauty of bronze sacrificial vessels
About 1122	CHOU	Rise of the feudal system Classic age of national culture develops	Influence of so-called Scythian animal style The Silver Island cauldron ? 10th cent
? 8th cent 776		First dated eclipse of the sun	The Ten Stone Drums Mural paintings referred to in literature
			Pottery imitates bronze forms
? 604-529		Lao-tzū	
? 551-472		Confucius	Bronze sacrificial vessels frequently show head of sacrificial victim in their decoration. The latter becomes stereotyped Immolation gives way to burial of models of human beings, animals, &c
372-289		Mencius	

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Mycenaean pottery	Phoenician alphabet
Temple of Luxor, Egypt	
The Gate of Lions and the Treasury of Atreus, Mycenae	
The hypostyle hall at Karnak	
The Ramesseum and Temple of Medinet Habu	The Pharaohs Ramesses II and Ramesses III
	The Trojan War
	The Hellenic Age Homer
	Increasing power of Assyria
Temple of Solomon metal-work by Hiram of Tyre	Tiglath Pileser III Sargon II Jews in captivity
Contact of Iranians with Assyria and Babylonia giving rise to early Persian art	Founding of Rome
'The Lion Hunt'—famous Assyrian bas-relief About 650 B C B M	Sennacherib destroys Babylon
Period of the black on red Greek vases	The Saite Empire in Egypt
Temple of Diana at Ephesus	Greeks invent eight-stringed lyre
'Frieze of Archers', from Susa Louvre	Nebuchadnezzar, rebuilder of Babylon
The Etruscan Cloaca Maxima at Rome	Cyrus the Great, the Persian Achaemenids
The Etruscan fine terra-cotta sculpture	The Buddha
Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis	Sappho
Period of red on black Greek vases	The battle of Marathon
Building of the Parthenon Ictinus, architect Phidias, sculptor.	
The Erechtheion	Herodotus Socrates
'Treasure of the Oxus' 5th cent B C	
Influence of the Greek painters, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Agatharcus (discoverer of perspective)	Plato

CHINA

<i>Date B C</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
		Rise of the House of Chi'n	Lacquer in colours used for small objects and as mural decoration Influence of the Indo- Scythians and Sarma- tians Introduction of gold, and possibly of glass
221	CH'IN Shih Huang T'i	Mêng T'ien in charge of work on Great Wall, the writing-brush Li Ssü alleged inventor of Small Seal characters Destruction of feudal system age of im- perialism Alleged record of first Bud- dhist missionary	The Great Wall The 'Burning of the Books' and destruction of an- cient bronzes Escape from tradition in art Evolution of a lighter 'animal style' Age of monumental architecture and sculp- ture and mural paint- ings (no survivals) Bronze mirrors
206	WESTERN HAN Liu Pang, founder	Revival of learning Development of the silk trade with the West	Revival in the arts Greater freedom and delicacy of ornament Bronze vessels in shape of sacrificial victims
157	Wu-ti	Extension of the empire Contact with Roman Empire and introduc- tion of glass Evolu- tion of brush-writing develops into calli- graphy as a fine art Growth of lexico- graphy and poetry Power of Taoist magi- cians	Bronze and iron inlaid with gold and silver First relics of silk weav- ings Relics of large and massive tombs and monumental sculpture First glazed pottery imitates bronze My- thological subjects in mural paintings and bas-reliefs
122		Chang Ch'ien's journey across Asia Ssü-ma Ch'ien, great historian,	Ho Chu-p'ing's tomb sculpture Free use of brick and tile in buildings

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus	Alexander the Great
Chief period of the Tanagra figures	The Seleucids The Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt
Influence of the Greek sculptor Praxiteles	Rome conquers Etruria Euclid Pyrrhus of Epirus supports Grecian revolt in Roman Italy and is defeated Asoka, King of India, makes Buddhism state religion Sends mission to Kashmir and Khotan, and thence, possibly, China
The Colossus of Rhodes The Sanchi Stūpa, India	Hannibal 2nd Punic (i.e. Phœnician) War
Greco-Buddhist sculpture and the temple of Bodhi-Gayā, India	Romans defeated by Hannibal at Battles of Lake Trasymene and Cannae
The Venus of Milo	Scipio Africanus conquers Hannibal Romans conquer Philip V, King of Macedon Judas Maccabeus
The Laocœon	3rd Punic War Rome defeats Carthage Rome decline of Republic Macedonia and Greece become Roman Provinces Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus killed
Vitruvius, Roman architect	Julius Caesar Pompey Antony and Cleopatra Augustus and the Roman Empire

CHINA

<i>Date</i> B C	<i>Dynasty</i> <i>and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and</i> <i>Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists,</i> <i>Monuments, and Art</i> <i>Developments</i>
2		Probable date of introduction of Buddhism	
A D 9	Wang Mang	The interregnum	
25	EASTERN HAN		Development of relief sculpture
58	Ming Ti	Edict of Ming Ti official introduction of Buddhism A D 65-7 The invention of paper	Development of portrait painting, and of calligraphy. Monumental animal and figure sculpture
166		Mission from Marcus Aurelius to China	First appearance of glazed porcellaneous stone-ware with many of the characteristics of porcelain
180		First Chinese Buddhist monk ordained	Great advance in composition and perspective in painting
190		First recorded Buddhist temple erected Loss of the foreign empire	The Han tomb brick paintings The Shantung bas-reliefs Buildings roofed with straight slopes
220	WEI SHU HAN WU	The Three Kingdoms Dismemberment of China	Pottery, bronze, &c crudely imitate Han models
	Lau Pei of the Shu Han	Chu-Ko Liang Kuan Yu Ts'ao Ts'ao	The bronze drums
247		Arrival of Sêng-hui in China	Buddhist painters in the south
265	WEST CHIN	Attempted reunion of the State	The first pagoda—said to have been built at Nanking
317	EAST CHIN	First reference to tea	
351	FORMER CH'IN LATER YEN	Period of Warring States and Division of North and South	
386 to 535	NORTH WEI	Supremacy of the Tartar Wei dynasties	Ku K'ai-chih, painter, of South China Great period of Buddhist sculpture in North China

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Rise of Alexandrian art	Jesus Chrst. Seneca Nero Pliny the Elder. Boadicea
Art of Pompeii and Herculaneum	Destruction of Jerusalem.
Trajan's column, Rome Hadrian's Wall, Britain The Pantheon Column of Marcus Aurelius Greco-Buddhist sculpture, Gandhara The great frescoes of the caves at Ajantā, India (1st to 7th century) Early Christian art of the Catacombs, Rome Arch of Septimius Severus, Rome	Kaniska, King of the Indo-Scyths Hadrian Marcus Aurelius Decline of Roman Empire attacks by Goths, Vandals, and Franks
	Tertullian
Palace of Diocletian, Spalato	Valerian Rise of Sāsānian Persian Empire
The Iron Column of Delhi, India	Constantine and the Byzantine Empire. Julian the Apostate. Theodosius the Great Christianity made official religion of Roman Empire St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, father of church music Romans evacuate Britain.

CHINA

<i>Date A D</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
397	NORTH LIANG	Chaotic age of confused records	First cave-shrines Tun-Huang and Yun-Kang Lung-mên.
401 420	WEST LIANG LIU SUNG	? Invention of ink First persecution of Buddhism, A D 444	
479	SOUTH CH'I	Rapid growth of Buddhism	First record of curved roofs
502	LIANG	Bodhidharma arrived A D 520	Sung Shan pagoda, A D. 523
534 535 550 557	EAST WEI WEST WEI NORTH CH'I NORTH CHOU	First reference to the compass Second persecution of Buddhism, A D 573	Yellow porcellaneous glazes and resonant stone-wares
581	SUI	Empire again united Imperial Canal begun	Hsieh Ho — the Six Canons of Painting
618	T'ANG T'ai Tsung	Envoy and pilgrim Hsuang Tsang and I Tsing first record of true porcelain 7th century	Renaissance of art inspired by Buddhism Full flowering of the revival in art Characteristics simplicity, vigour, nobility
682	Empress Wu	Expansion of empire contact by land and sea with Western civilizations	Painters Yen Li-pên, Li Ssü-hsun founding of Northern and Southern schools
713	Ming Huang	Augustan Age of literature The poets Po Chu-i, Li Po, Tu Fu Han-lin Academy founded Toleration of Jews, Manichaeans, Nestorian Christians, &c	The painter Wu Tao-tzû subjects, Buddhist, Kuan-yin, &c, landscape Wang Wei Southern school of painting ? Han Kan Influence of T'ang art on Japan
781		The Nestorian Tablet at Sianfu	End of Indian (Gupta) influence on Chinese sculpture Noble style in stone and pottery
844	Wu-tsung	Great persecution of Buddhism Beginning of book-printing Invention of gunpowder.	'Lost porcelain of the T'ang' (found in Mesopotamia) Brown, green, yellow, and blue glazes on pottery The Lohan, ceramic

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Fall of Rome and beginning of the Dark Ages in European art (A.D. 410)	Alanc, King of the Visigoths St Augustine ('The City of God'). Attila, King of the Huns Hengist and Horsa in Britain King Arthur and his Knights Theodoric
Sancta Sophia, Constantinople A.D. 537	St Columba of Iona Justinian and Theodora
Byzantine art—zenith	Belisarius
Development of Byzantine mosaics, miniatures and jewellery	Jutes, Angles, and Saxons invade Britain
Palace of Ctesiphon	Pope Gregory the Great, father of 'Gregorian' music
Indonesian Art, Siam	Ethelbert, King of Kent St Augustine
Stagnation in European art	Mohammed 'The Prophet' Rise of Venice trade with Constantinople Arabs subdue Egypt, Persia, Sicily
Rise of Mohammedan art	Arabs conquer the Moors
Spread of Islam, Hispano-Moresque art impulse.	Arabs and Moors conquer Spain The Venerable Bede
Great Mosque of Damascus	
Dark Ages of European art and culture	Haroun al-Raschid of <i>The Arabian Nights</i> .
Great Mosque of Cordova.	Charlemagne Founding of Holy Roman Empire of the West Byzantines defeated
	First Danes in England Egbert, King of Wessex
Carolingian Art	Foundation of the Russian Empire
Rise of Khmer art, Cambodia	Charles the Bald, King of France

CHINA

<i>Date A D</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
		Territory ceded to Kitan Tartars, who give the name Kitai (Cathay) to China	statue, British Museum Interaction of Persia and China in ceramics and textiles Decline, after the great persecution of A D 844
907	THE FIVE DYNASTIES SUNG	Period of fifty years' chaos	Degeneration, especially in sculpture
960		Northern Sung 960-1127 Southern Sung 1127-1279 (Tartar dynasties in the north, Liao, Western Liao, Chin)	Revival Era of the connoisseur and collector, of archaeology and the printing of catalogues and encyclopaedias Direct Indian influence on art ceases
		Age of self-communion Triumph of Ch'an (Zen), Contemplative School of Buddhism	Great delicacy and beauty of painting, especially in landscape, flower, and bird paintings
1004	Ching-tê	Gave his name to the great pottery town, Ching-tê Chên	Purity of line and colour in pottery and porcelain Apogee of Chun, Ting, and Celadon
1068		The reformer Wang An-Shih	Decline of sculpture use of poor materials
1101	Hui Tsung	Captured by Tartars in 1125	Bird painter Founder of Academy of Painting Li Lung-mien, painter Painting as interpretation of experience
1130		Chu Hsi, philosopher	Kuo Hsi Essay on, and painter of landscape
1200		Ssü-ma Kuang, historian	Hsia Kuei, painter of 'A Myriad Miles of the Yangtse'—Ma Yuan, Mi Fei and Mu Ch'i, painters
1215		Occupation of Peking by Mongols	Hang Chou, the Southern Capital with its canals and four hundred marble bridges
1260	YÜAN Kublai Khan	Mongol conquest and dynasty Period of great expansion Age of drama and the novel	Continuation of Chinese tradition Interaction with Persia and Tibet Chao Méng-fu, painter of

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Zenith of Hispano-Moresque art Dissemination, through Arab influence, of the art and learning of the Orient	Alfred the Great Defeat of the Danes The Inca Empire Ethelred the Unready, Arabs invade India
Early stained glass in France	
Byzantine cathedral of Périgueux First monasteries of Mount Athos	Firdousi, Persian poet
Beginning of a revival in European art Romanesque Saint Mark's, Venice The Abbey of Cluny	Danish conquest of England. Canute Harold of Wessex Battle of Hastings William the Conqueror Hereward the Wake
Westminster Hall. London Bridge	William Rufus
Toulouse School of Romanesque sculpture	
Temple of Angkor Wat, Cambodia French Gothic architecture appears Romanesque (Norman) period continues in England Work begun on Notre Dame Leaning Tower of Pisa The Giralda and Alcázar, Seville Chartres Cathedral Early Limoges enamellers Canterbury Cathedral built in transitional style Early English period of Gothic architecture Salisbury Cathedral. Mont Saint Michel begun The Alhambra, Granada Nicola Pisano, sculptor Kamakura Buddha, Japan Henry III Westminster Abbey The Belfry of Bruges	Saladin Henry II, King of England and most of France Tristan and Ysolde St Thomas Becket Frederick Barbarossa Richard Cœur de Lion Genghis Khan Robin Hood St Francis of Assisi Magna Carta Rise of Guelphs and Ghibellines. Failure and return of 5th Crusade 'Sumer is i-cumen in'—famous 13th-century part-song 'Aztecs enter Mexico Roger Bacon, philosopher-scientist Dante The Troubadours

CHINA

<i>Date A D</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
1275		Marco Polo the Venetian at Peking	horses Chinese textiles influence Western
1368	MING Hung Wu	National monarchy Contraction of the empire	Art revival bold forms, brilliant colour Painters, Lu Ch'ü, Ch'ün Ying, T'ang Yin, Wên Chêng-ming (in monochrome) Lin Liang, Wang Li-pên, Wu Wei
1403	Yung Lo	Capital transferred, Nanking to Peking, A D 1421	'Sacrificial' and 'Precious stone' red glazes, <i>blanc de Chine</i> porcelain
1426	Hsuan Tê	Wang Yang-ming.	
1465	Ch'eng Hua		
1488	Hung Chih	First Portuguese ships at Canton, A D 1517	Early blue and white porcelain Enamels on porcelain <i>Cloisonné</i> , best period. The Porcelain Pagoda
1506	Chêng Tê		The Ming tombs, and the palaces of Peking
1522	Chia Ching	Arrival of Jesuit Father Ricci in Peking, A D 1601.	Early carved lacquer
1567	Lung Ch'ing		Modern type carpets
1573	Wan Li		
		First English vessels at Canton, A D 1637	Kuan-yin now becomes a goddess
1644	CH'ING Shun Chih	Manchu conquest and dynasty	Delicacy and sophistication Zenith of technical achievement in porcelain <i>Famille verte</i> enamels Painting and sculpture decadent and imitating the antique
1662	K'ang Hsi	Era of modern history and Europeans in China Expansion of empire Westward	Zenith of technical achievement in carved lacquer, carpets, carved jade, and semi-precious stones
		Researches, catalogues, encyclopaedias	
1680		Growth of trade East India Company	
1723	Yung Chêng	Roman Catholic Missionaries expelled	<i>Famille rose</i> enamels and painted porcelain
1736	Ch'ien Lung	Era of conquest and extension of empire The Emperor, a great general, artist, and poet	Peking architecture in imitation of ancient buildings Emasculate design

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Cimabue, 1240-1302	Edward I Robert the Bruce
Giotto, 1267-1337	The Black Death
Albi Cathedral	Crecy and Poitiers The Black Prince
Windsor Castle	Beginning of the Hundred Years War
Winchester College William of Wyke-	Rise of the Medici Chaucer.
ham Gothic, Decorated period	Wiclif Tamerlane (Timur)
Arras tapestry First oil paintings	
Doges Palace, Venice	Gutenberg discovers printing, 1436
The Italian Renaissance	Humanism Zenith of Venetian power
Fra Angelico, 1387-1455	Agincourt Joan of Arc
Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519	Turks capture Constantinople
Caxton first printed book 1477 Gior-	Wars of the Roses Columbus.
gione, 1478-1510 Aubusson tapestry	Machiavelli
Botticelli, 1444-1510 Durer	Palestrina, composer The Great Mogul
Quentin Matsys	Cortés and Pizarro
Holbein Michelangelo P Breughel	Henry VIII Sir Thomas More
François premier style Bihzad	Torquemada and the Inquisition
Majolica, best period	Montaigne
Titian Benvenuto Cellini	Akbar, Grand Mogul
Renaissance in England transition from	Queen Elizabeth Shakespeare
Tudor style	James I The Gunpowder Plot
el Greco Manu	Francis Bacon
Baroque art Inigo Jones, architect	Charles I, 1625-49
Persian Miniatures—zenith	Gustavus Adolphus
The Taj-Mahal, India	Galileo
Rubens Velasquez Van Dyck Frans	Richelieu Milton
Hals Nicholas Poussin François	The Thirty Years War, 1618-48
Mansard	Cromwell, 1649-60
Destruction of English church figure	Purcell, composer
sculpture by iconoclasts	Charles II Plague and Fire of Lon-
Rembrandt Jordaens Claude Lor-	don
rain Great Mosque of Delhi	Molière Spinoza
Korin, Japanese painter	Stradivarius
Terborg Le Nôtre	Louis XIV
Sir Christopher Wren Jean Tijou	James II
St Paul's Hampton Court additions	William and Mary
Vermeer of Delft	Newton
Kenzan, Japanese artist	Leibnitz
Dresden China	Peter the Great
Palace of Versailles Watteau	Queen Anne Duke of Marlborough
William Hogarth	Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>
Sèvres porcelain Gobelins tapestries	George I The South Sea Bubble.
Craze for <i>Chinoiserie</i>	George II 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'
Canaletto	Clive Wolfe
F Boucher	Voltaire
Sir William Chambers Chippendale	George III Mozart

CHINA

<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
1792	Chia-Ch'ing	Lord Macartney's embassy	Over-elaborate decoration
1796		Secret Societies powerful	Good porcelain still made
1800		Lord Amherst's embassy	Great skill no inspiration DECLINE IN ART

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
<p>Sir Joshua Reynolds The Royal Academy Canova The Brothers Adam Hokusai Hiroshige Corot French 'Empire' style</p> <p>DECLINE IN EUROPEAN ART</p>	<p>America's Declaration of Independence French Revolution Beethoven Goethe Napoleon.</p>

INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

- Alexander the Great, 78
 Amida, 173
 Asoka, King, 121
 Attiret, Pere, 237
- Bodhidharma, Indian patriarch,
 144
 Botticelli, 95.
- Castiglione, Père, 237
 Chambers, Sir William, 241-2
 Chang, brothers, 196
 Chang Ch'ien, envoy, 87, 88.
 Chang Hsuan, painter, 170
 Chang Seng-yu, painter, 114
 Chang Tsai, poet, 107
 Chao Ch'ang, painter, 190
 Chao Mêng-fu, painter, 209
 Chao Ta-nien, painter, 189
 Chi'en Lung, Emperor, 233, 237,
 239
 Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, Emperor,
 64
 Chung-tê, Emperor, 198
 Ch'iu Ying, painter, 212
 Chu Hsi, 2
 Chu-Ko Liang, statesman, 108.
 Confucius, 23, 51, 56, 62, 64, 68,
 83, 136, 167
- d'Entrecolles, Père, 226.
- Fan K'uan, painter, 189.
 Ferghāna, 89
 Fu Hsi, Emperor, 9, 10, 12
- Gay, John, 241.
 Giorgione, 112.
 Giotto, 162
 Gordon, Charles George, 244
- Hadrian, Emperor, 84.
 Han Kan, painter, 169
 Haroun al-Raschid, 165.
- Ho Chu-p'ing, general, 88, 90.
 Hsia Kuci, painter, 189
 Hsieh Ho, painter, 136, 187.
 Hsu Hui, minister, 45
 Hsuan Tsang, envoy, 154
 Hsuan Tsung, Emperor, 173
 Hu, Empress, 119
 Huang Ti, Emperor, 13, 23
 Hui Tsung, Emperor and painter,
 190.
- I Ching (or I Tsing), pilgrim,
 154, 174.
- Jên Jên-fa, 209
- K'ang Hsi, Emperor, 255 sqq
 Kaniska, King, 117, 119, 134
 Ku K'ai-chih, painter, 112, 135,
 159
 Kuan Ti, God of War, 109
 Kuan-yin, goddess, 162, 167-8,
 171, 173, 203, 218
 Kublai Khan, 207, 208, 209,
 210, 214, 219.
 Kuo Hsi, painter, 187, 188.
- Lao-tzŭ, philosopher, 47, 141,
 166, 167.
- Li An-chung, painter, 190.
 Li Ch'êng, painter, 189
 Li Lung-mien, painter, 189.
 Li Po, poet, 163.
 Li Ssŭ, Emperor, 61-2
 Li Ssŭ-hsun, painter, 159.
 Li Ti, painter, 189
 Liang K'ai, painter, 180
 Lin Liang, painter, 211
 Liu Pang, founder of the Han
 dynasty, 67
 Liu Pei, Emperor, 42, 108.
 Liu Yu, Prince, 81
 Leonardo da Vinci, 2.
 Lo Tsun, monk, 111.

- Lu Ch'i, painter, 212.
 Lu T'an-wei, painter, 114

 Ma Lin, painter, 189
 Manjusri, 73
 Ma Yuan, painter, 189
 Mazarin, Cardinal, 232
 Mêng T'ien, general, 59
 Michelangelo, 138
 Mi Fei, painter, 189
 Ming, Emperor, 92, 93
 Ming Huang, Emperor, 161-4
 Ming Ti, Emperor, 83
 Mu Ch'i, painter, 189

 Pliny, 79, 89.
 Po Chu-i, poet, 151, 163
 Polo, Marco, 42, 190, 191, 206,
 208

 Rembrandt, 95

 Saladin the Great, 197.
 Sargon of Agade, 23
 Sêng-hui, priest, 109
 Shên Nung, ruler, 12, 13
 Shih Huang Ti, Emperor, 57-9,
 64, 84, 86, 90, 99
 Shun, Emperor, 23, 24
 Soleyman, Arab merchant, 174
 Ssü-ma Ch'ien, historian, 87
 Ssü-ma Kuang, historian, 194

 Tamerlane (Timur), 210
 T'ang T'ai Tsung, Emperor, 152.

 T'ang Yin, painter, 212.
 T'ang Ying, craftsman, 238
 Timur (Tamerlane), 210
 T'sai Yung, calligraphist, 96
 Ts'ao Pu-hsing, painter, 109
 Tu Fu, poet, 163

 Vaisravana, 173
 Vinci, Leonardo da, 2

 Wang An-shih, statesman, 191
 Wang Hsi-chih, calligraphist, 96
 Wang Li-pên, painter, 211
 Wang Mang, Emperor, 90
 Wang Wei, painter, 168-9.
 Wang Yên-Shou, poet, 81
 Wei-ch'ih I-sêng, painter, 170
 Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na, painter,
 170
 Wen Chêng-ming, painter, 212
 Wu, Emperor, 87
 Wu Tao-tzû, landscape artist,
 161-5
 Wu Ti, Emperor, 67, 99
 Wu-tsung, Emperor, 174
 Wu Wei, painter, 211

 Yang Kuci-fei, 163
 Yao, Emperor, 23
 Yen Li-pên, painter, 159
 Yu, Emperor, 24, 25, 26, 44.
 Yuan Chieh, poet, 131
 Yung Chêng, Emperor, 233, 237,
 239
 Yung Lo, Emperor, 219.

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